

Full Moon at Chitral; Historical Travelogue-
2013

Military History of Chitral 1850-2014

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Introduction & Background

I have travelled twice to Chitral; one was in 1995 when I came alone from Multan on a fifteen days leave to travel from Peshawar to Gilgit via Chitral. It was October then and I took the last wagon from Peshawar city at around 1900 hours. It was journey mostly in darkness where I had no idea about the history or the geography through which I was passing by. We stopped short of Lowari top, there was a women also travelling and I was just inquisitive about her identity. In early morning hours we crossed the top and by morning we were in the Chitral. I had no idea about the town , one van took me to the Chitral Mess where I introduced myself and was given a room . I spent the night in the mess and next day travelled to the Kalash Valley as there seems to be no other purpose of coming to Chitral than to see these Kafir people. I had been reading the Kafiristan by Surgeon Marshall and as such had inkling about them. I stayed in a local hotel , bought the local wine and just sat outside drinking it and smoking hashish and enjoying the scenery and people. In this state I remained for hours and slowly and gradually I observed that I have lost that uniqueness which these people generally attach with the visitors; I was harmless person. There was a foreigner tourist group as well. They were a mix company mostly retired persons and they were travelling in the Central Asia on a bus.

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I observe the local girls and was disappointed to see them wearing the standard Bata shoes , from this point onward they lost all of my inquisitiveness for me they have become commercial. I still recall that one family of two children and their mother sat almost whole day beside me in the open without any talk. I just played with the children and mother kept on doing some of her chores. I felt as if I belong to this place and this is my family. I visited the village , my mind was still thinking about the hidden valleys that lay beyond this Bhumbirit. After spending three nights I was back in Chitral from where after a day occupation I was on board a local jeep stacked with wood and reached Mastuj by last light. In the mess there was a visitor , a foreign military attaché I presumed and who was being given company by a Chitral Scouts officer. I learnt first time about the stone 'laid' and I did not went out to locate it but the military attaché did so. Lieutenant Colonel Murad Khan was a legend even then , he had recently committed suicide {1989} and as such none talked about him when inquired from waiters but in bazaar I did mentioned his name few times and every time the people response was positive.

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The wing commander at Mastuj, I forgot his name was kind enough to accommodate me in his home and next morning after breakfast I just started walking towards the Shandur Pass. I also increased my knowledge by appreciating that the best apples are in Mastuj , one man rather the wing commander had told me while presenting some apples that even if you keep them in your luggage the aroma will stay for days.

Chitral Scouts were raised on 23rd July 1903 having six companies, with Captain O Grady as the commandant along with one more British officers, and Mehtar Shuja Ul Mulk Of Chitral as honorary colonel commandant, all in all a strength of 600 men. On the eve of First Great War it had a strength of almost a thousand men organized into nine companies or two wings. It took active part in Third Afghan War of 1919 and captured a town inside Afghanistan. In 1942 it was named as **Chitral State Scouts** and came under the control of Frontier Corps with a strength of ten companies. In 1953 it reverted to its old nomenclature yet remained under control of Frontier Corps. Chitral State Scouts played a key and vital role in the Kashmir Liberation of 1947-48. In June 1973 expansion was undertaken resultantly another wing was raised. Followed by one more in June 1986 ; next year in July two more wings and artillery battery were also added. It was raised at Chitral in 1903 , shifted to Drosh in 1926 and later move back to Chitral in 1992.

Chitral District covers an area of 5000 square miles and had a population of 315,000 in 2001. In 1895 the population was under 70,000 humans, and 1,17,000 in 1961. Chitral is a confluence of two valleys and rivers , the western being Tirch Mir Valley which takes origin from 25230 feet highest peak and is 40 miles long with Garm Chashma as the major town and Dorah Pass as the doorway and the eastern Yarkhun Valley which is longest among two and runs a distance of 250 miles starting from Sor Yarkun near Oxus few miles east of Broghul Pass in the extreme north to the

Arandu in extreme south , Mastuj and Booni are the major towns. There are more than 40 peaks above 20,000 feet in the district. The two rivers{Trich & Yarkhun} joins together near Chitral and from hence known as River Chitral and after exiting the district boundaries at Arandu it is known as River Kunhar. Chitral is a frontier district and forms part of international border. The Pakistan –Afghanistan border follows the crest of Hindukush, starting a little west of Kilik Pass and running westward shortly becomes the frontiers of Chitral at Darwaza Pass{3893 meters} , for hundred miles it follows a jagged glaciated mountain terrain encompassing Boroghal Pass{3801 meters} . Only ten miles separates Chitral from Tajikistan with Afghan Wakhan strip in between. Frontier bends southwest at Kala Pamja ; following axis of Hindukush it extends to another hundred miles at Dorah Pass which connects Chitral with Ishkashm in Badkhashan in Afghanistan. Within this hundred miles of stretch are the highest peaks of Hindukush¹. The boundaries of Chitral with other adjoining states {Gilgit, Dir , Swat} were agreed upon in 1914.

Chitral takes its name from the Chitral town which is situated almost in the lower middle of the district, it is also known as Qashkar it attained the status of a settled district from a princely state in August 1969; in April 1972 all titles were also abolished . Presently Chitral is divided into two administrative layers, the Upper Chitral is known as Mastuj sub division and comprises of three tehsils namely Mastuj, Torkhow and Mulkhaw with Booni as the headquarters, Lower Chitral sub division comprises of Chitral, Drosh and

Lotkow tehsils. History of the Chitral Scouts is mainly spread in the Lower Chitral areas.

Chitral possess a unique feature in the present day world history, the presence of 3000 odd Kafir tribes among over whelming peaceful Muslims; there are no Christians, Hindus or Sikhs in Chitral. The Kafir tribe is settled in the lower Chitral on the western bank of Chitral River scattered in three valleys namely the Rumbir, Birir and Bhumbirit. Physically Chitral is the largest district of Pakistan in terms of area. Chitral is like many other mountainous towns, a river passing through it, green valley, houses on the top, extreme winter and peace. Unlike Tochi Valley it is much more green and wide with higher peaks. As compare to the Kurram Valley it is narrower with more steep banks and field elevations. Gilgit and Chitral seems to be identical in nature and their history is also similar in pattern. It is the presence of colourful Kafirs which gives Chitral its unique flavour of history.

Chitral Scouts have quite a few distinctive marks, one they do not speak Pashtu secondly they are from a settled district which was a princely state in the past and above all they all are from one qaum. There are other cultural features as well, geographically they remained cut off from rest of the country during winter months ,; their only access via Afghanistan . Not long ago Toyota Hiace used to ply between the Peshawar and Chitral during winter through Jalalabad into Asmar then into Arandu Valley. Lowari tunnel is still not open for public use but in winter traffic is allowed thus a millennium old issue has been resolved. Lowari Tunnel

project was initiated by the Prime Minister Zulfiqar Bhutto in 1973 and completed by President Musharraf in 2007.

In May 2013 i was fortunate enough to be allowed to visit Chitral and more specifically the Chitral Scouts to write their history, thus this work is the history of Chitral Scouts indeed. I travelled in June with my friend Major tahir Kayani, Mr Waqar of Jhelum, and Mr also from Jhelum. I had made palns about the trips main aim wass to do photography. I was sitting in my room at Peshawar Mess when all these walk in and i realise from that moment that nothing usefull can be achieved in the forthcoming trip. The culture of army , militia and civilian are entirely different in certain aspects like dress code. Thus it is more of liability to go along with civilian friends in a military set up, retired persons are also a liability in same sense but at the most one can be tolerated; serving officers are entirely different ball and agme because they fall under same rules and regulations as ythe visiting regiment.

It took us almost ten hours to drive

A Convolutd History of Chitral {Kashkar}. Chapter One.

Chitral's history is interlinked with the history and geography of Kafiristan, Nuristan, Dir, Swat, Gilgit and Kashmir apart from Kabul. In other words The

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Tirch Mir, Nanga Parbat, Rakaposhi, K-2 are inter connected, one can view the same in terms of mehtar, nawab, khan, rais, maharaja and political agent. It is also a conflict & cooperation between the Hindukush, Karakorum and Himalayas. What is written about Chitral is mainly by the Chitralis which primarily revolves around the prince's or royal history; something very similar to England.; Military history of Chitral is almost extinct.

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Chitral have a history which is interesting, colourful having all segments of life, although it is not yet fully understood. The state known, as Chitral in perception is an amalgamation of many small fiefdoms, serfdoms and odd tribes' most obvious being the Kafirⁱⁱ. Chitral is in fact a combination of two major riparian cultures and civilisation namely the Tirch Mir River and Yarkhun River; both meet just a mile upstream of present day airport and just miles away from the century old fort and the city itself. These two rivers express two distinct identities and cultures and it is only at Chitral that these two cultures join together. River Gilgit is also part of this specific mountainous entity.

When God created Adam and Eve then he give them sixteen children and Adam distributed world among them and gave Siam to the sixteenth child.; who protested over this and ask for Kalashgum {Chitral} which god had kept for himself. This is how the oral history of Chitral is narrated by generations.

TirchMir was the mountain god standing majestically at the west of Chitral, the early morning sun rays casting golden radiant around it and at sunset the crimson

color bidding farewell to the day's journey. Aryans worshipped mountains, they were remote, inaccessible yet visible with efforts. Clouds around them bringing rain and darkness. At night these clouds would wrap the full moon around their web creating myths and fables; Tirch Mir is no exception rather it is among those very rare mountains along with Rakaposhi and NangaParbat to have fertile valley running around them. Even among these Tirch Mir stands out as it is more fertile, plain and green in nature. West of Chitral town is the confluence of two rivers which are also two distinct paths of history. The eastern River Yarkhun leads to further north into Booni, Sonoghar, Mastuj, Wakhan , Kashgar and into China; { or towards the Rakaposhi, K-2 , }, where as the western or TirchMir river leads into Afghanistan{Badakshan}.

Aryan migration started in 2000-3000 years BC ago from Central Asian highlands which were climatically extreme in winter with little to grow moreover the built in natural instinct of human must have drove them downwards.; thus there is nothing abnormal to write that the early civilisation took birth at the Tirch Mir{Kashkar} and from there it moved down ward and towards the west with the flow of water. Aryans not necessarily were violence lovers, among them there were some, having temper bit higher than others, it seems the mild tempered and intelligent among them settled among these upper nature blessed areas. These areas are nothing short of heaven, fresh water both cold and warm year around, streams full of fish, fruit of all kind, apple, grapes, walnut, apricot, peach, pomegranate, wild birds, sanctuary of migrating birds, ibex, Markhoor, snow leopards, bear, trees

that few can match their grandeur like maple and pine covers it like a shawl; list can go on. Mountains have a charm of themselves and in our entire mythology world over it has always been the mountains which remains the abode of god, lest it not be forgotten that Moses{pbuh} went up the Mount Sinai to have the commandments.

Kashkar was the first of the many valleys or waterways which the Aryans adopted for their migration downwards. The beauty, serenity, peace and above all the abundance of fresh water all along must have been very tempting for them to settle astride the water flow; history is interwoven with other mountainous states. Being on the edge of all of them it attained a greater strategic significance. It is the door way to the Central Asia or vice versa a route to the plains. On the north it is bounded by Oxus or the Wakhan, on the west by Gilgit, Yasin and Ishkoman mountainous states, on the south by Dir and Swat and in the south west by the Afghan province of Asmar and Nuristan

Alexander the Great came down towards Indus from the Oxus marching along the fringes of Tirch Mir and there are all the reasons to believe that he crossed into the Tirch Mir River culture and flowing with it marched through the Ayun, Drosh, Mirkhani, Dommel Nissar, Arandu and pouring into Bajaur. Chitral is not mentioned by Herodotus or by the Alexander the Great's historians. Present Chitral as such never existed in ancient times, it was known as Kashkar. Basing upon the geography it is logical to assume that majority of his troops must have intruded into the Chitral Valley as no less than 19 mountain passes were available to

Alexander while marching down from Oxus towards Indus. It must be kept in background that Alexander's history was written almost 400 hundred years after his death by Arian while sitting at Egypt. There are confusion in names, places and dates. Greek mythology revolves around Dionysus the last of Olympian and Tirch Mir full fills the description, after all Dionysus is related to grapes & wine makingⁱⁱⁱ. Moreover the Panjkora River which takes origin from the Kashkar's{Chitral} eastern wall 'Hindu Raj' is very much covered by Arian in his history and also by host of other earlier Greek historians who all unfortunately never visited the area to ascertain the fiction from facts basing upon geography.

Buddhist Chitral

599-527 B.C., by this period some of the Aryans had been assimilated in the life of a settler, they now live in cities which became small kingdoms spread all over the India , Meghda was one such kingdom.

In the same time period a son was born to Suddhodana king of Magadha, he named his son as Sakyamuni Gautama he was popularly known as Siddhartha and today is famous as Buddha.^{iv}. Magadha was one of the leading and rather the most powerful kingdom of the eastern India which existed at that time it comprehends all the Gangetic provinces^v. Thus it seems that whereas the area astride the Indus was under the Persian as their province the area further east i.e. the Ganges plains were under the

descendants of the Aryans from where a new social system was taking birth in the form of Buddhism.

For twenty seven years his father shielded his son from the cruelty of the world, the death, the old age, sickness and misery but one day Siddhartha was able to see it when he went outside his palace. Buddha was married at the age of nineteen and had a son also, for six years after his first encounter with the dark side of the life he wondered around and mediated and fasted more or less in the pattern of the Mahavira , he finally attained nirvana under a tree ^{vi}

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Buddha was a revolutionary probably the first socialist of the world, he was against the caste and promoted a classless society free of rituals and rites where all were equal, Buddha died in 543 B.C., and it was not almost 235 years after his death that his teachings were collected and they continued to be collected under the reign of Asoka in 200 B.C., in the year 420-500 C.E. there existed a great Buddhist university at Nalinda. However later the Bhuddism was divided into two main sects one is called Hinayana which does not believe in his divinity and neither worship him in the form of images the other Mahayana which makes images of Buddha and considered him divine ,it is Mahayana which spreads in China and in India thus the engravings of Buddha in Mastuj {upper Chitral} Hunza, Gilgit, Skardu. This also explains the origins of Kafirs, they probably came from east of Maghda to Chitral with what was probably the very first 'Hippy Trail'.

The period from Ashoka till the arrival of Islam in 700 AD is termed as the dark ages of India by historians, for

the reason that very little historical account has been found of that period. Tirth Mir Kingdom was under the suzerainty of King of Kabul, Raja Jaipal. It was an Aryan kingdom, Hinduism itself cannot be expressed in the same language as one can use for Christianity; it is a conglomeration of over five hundred different sects ranging from worshippers of Phallus{Shiva} to the Monkey {Hanuman}. Chitral was one of the finest among such fanatics. It had very less population probably not more than twenty odd thousand humans and equal number of animals; it was certainly a popular spot for migratory birds coming from Siberia as they still land here. Chitral then was ruled by the Sia Posh or Black Kafirs. The upper valleys or Upper Chitral was divided into many smaller Khowistan, Torkhow the upper Khow, Mulkhow the lower Khow these names persists even today. Buddhism had its impact in the area with one odd inscription of 9th Century AD records the fact that the area is under King Jaipal of Kabul. Khovar language has quite a number of words from Sanskrit in it. One stupa of Buddha is still intact at Torkhow known as Kalandar-i-Bhuttani, {mendicant of stone}

Chitral also remained a well reputed spot for flesh market; Badakshan across the valley in Afghanistan was famous for its horses. This can be one explanation of such a variety of languages as caravans moving west towards the Kashmir preferred travelling through Arandu- Drosh- Madaglasht- Tangir- Chilas crossing River Indus; thus having only one river to cross instead of two if they choose any pass west of Chitral. Babur the Great had to cross three rivers every time he came down upon India. On the other hand, caravans moving from Kabul towards Eastern

Turkestan{Sinkiang} also preferred Arandu Pass. But by and large Chitral remain hidden in history and present hypothesis about its history are based upon geography which have remained intact in all these millenniums.

Islam knocked on the Chitral or Khowistan's door in the aftermath of the Turk's defeat in the hands of Arabs in 751 AD. Broghul Pass has been the main entry route of Mongols and tartars in the past. Marco Polo referred to the country as Bolor which included Gilgit as well. Another strand of history recalls a Chinese tribe by the name of Yarkhun to have invaded the area. **By 10th Century AD** the area was ruled by the Kafirs however Mahmud of Ghazna's rise and his utter destruction of idols in the India must have been the cause of the downfall of kafirs and slowly but gradually they started getting into the small valleys. Tamerlane's conquest of India and his slaughter of Hindus was the last of the nails in the kafir culture. The area however retained its identity as it even today is known as Kafiristan although the major portion which lies in Afghanistan is now known as Nuristan.

Chagati Khanate- Marwa Ul Nihar

Great Khan 'Temujin' had divided his empire which at time comprised of China, Central Asia, Middle East, Afghanistan among his three sons. Present day Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Chitral were all part of Chagtai Khanate. Mughuls are Aryans, they belong to Turk ethnic group and they were settled in the Central Asia or more

precisely Eastern Turkestan which comprised of Samarkand, Bukhara, Fergana, Tashkent, Kashgiri cities. They were in area between River Oxus {Amu Darya} and River Jaxartes {Sur Darya} thus only Amu Darya and Wakhan Strip separates them from Chitral, Hunza, Gilgit onwards to River Indus. Chitral has striking resemblance with the vales of Fergana, the birth place of Mughul dynasty which ruled India for three hundred years. It was Amir Taimour {Tamerlane} who first ventured into the adjoining areas during his initial days in power. Chitral like Fergana was composed of several small valleys without any strong central authority, poor in resources and harsh climatic conditions, he has referred the area as Marwa Ul Nihar^{vii}.

The Eastern Chagtai Khanate also known as Marwa Ul Nihar^{viii} was Muslim by faith following Hanfaai & Malaki sect, which is more liberal in interpretation of Islamic laws for instance almost all Mughul emperors were fond of liquor yet detested pig meat on religious grounds and even in dire hunger never took it^{ix}. They would pray and give alms, keep fast in the holy month of Ramadan and sacrifice lambs in Zi ul haj month. Family life was important to them and they seldom left their wives for long, always respectful of laws. They were gentlemen in nature, adhering and following a code of warfare based upon the Temujin's Code and that of Prophet Muhammad {pbuh} directives. One of the fundamental aspect of Islamic warfare is deception 'War is nothing but deception' and Timurids followed it by spirit. Assassination was a common method to remove the leader by any means; poison was most favoured method. Battles were fierce and had to be fought with a character; the life of the vanquished depends

upon his conduct in the battle he had recently lost. The loser had to put the grass in his mouth to show his surrender. Courtesies were immense, a khan or mirza would greet the equivalent by receiving him almost two miles ahead of his camp. Headgear was important and none was seen without it, khans would send the caps as mark of respect and gift to fellow family members. Food was in shape of meat and fruits, all this holds true for Chitral as well. Yet the great wall of Tirth Mir kept Chitral out of the main focus, there are no individuals in the art of warfare worth mentioning.

Babur after capturing Kabul learnt about the Kafiristan but took no immediate action. In the power tussle that was taking place in Fergana the small states like Chitral had no major role to play but the loyalists of Babur started plotting in these small states and when and if succeeded were rewarded with the kingship of the area; similar story took place in Chitral. In 16th century the Chitral River banks were under the control of Mughuls with Shah Rais on the throne, this Rais family had been inside the power corridor since 1050 AD. His advisor was Sangin Ali a Persian, who before his death in 1570 had become a king maker, with the passage of time the family of Sangin Ali came into power and remained so till the end of the state; completely ousting the Rais family. Within the Sangin Ali's family the similar pattern of in fight as seen in Mughuls followed which resulted in lineages; the Katoras take their name from the Sangin Ali's grandson where as the Khushwaqts take it from the second son.

Dardistan, Dagestan, Kohistan, Kafiristan & Khowistan are few of the geographical identities which have

been associated with the east and west Hindukush areas; among all these Khowistan {Chitral} was the only one which was named due to the language bondage. The area east of Chitral encompasses Kashmir, Swat, Dir and East Turkistan and interaction among them in last two hundred years have set the stage for present and to some extent the future of the area. Geographically the area between the River Gilgit and River Chitral can be taken as one entity and it was one entity as late as 1850 when the Gilgit was under the Mehtar^x Aman ul Mulk . Swat was not a state as yet then, Nawab of Dir and Khan of Jandol were two other strong contenders of the suzerainty but the Hindu Raj mountains kept them at bay . It was the Arandu Pass which remains open year around and provides an easy access to the Pathan and Afghan to venture into Chitral Lower. Upper Chitral remained almost independent even during the reign of Aman uk Mulk , it had the visitors from the west passing over the Broghul Pass and settling into the villages of Tor Khow and Mulkhaw. The Lotkow the western area of Chitral had the Afghan or Tajik travellers coming across the mountain ranges via Shah Salim Pass. In nut shell, Chitral's passes provides the gateway to the northern parts of India, Kashmir and now Pakistan. Broghul can be rightly called as the door to the Kashmir. Even now the population of Broghul hops over the Darkot Pass to have the supplies bought from Gilgit traders rather than coming to Mastuj or Chitral, because the distance involved is quite less at Darkot.

The Upper Chitral is predominantly Ismaili by faith and Lower Chitral is Sunni. Ismaili are a sub sect of Islam which believe in the living Imamate, Prince Karim Agha Khan is the current imam. In the making of Pakistan, Prince

Karim's grandfather Agha Khan played a key and vital role, in fact he headed the Muslim League for almost a decade and half since its creation in 1906. Traditionally it has always been the eldest son of living Imam who is nominated but in case of present imam it was not followed and instead of his father Prince Aly Khan; he was nominated thus a section within the Ismailis also exist. Upper Chitral has influence of Tajikistan, Badakshan and Pamir whereas the lower Chitral is under the influence of Pathan culture or Kunar culture which creeps up stream through the Chitral River

Socially the society comprises of the ruling families known as Adamzads, Arbabzads come next in ladder followed by the Fakir & Maskin{ same as in Aryans}. There had been religious persecutions; as late as in 1926 s Mehtar carried out an all out effort to convert the Ismaili living in upper Chitral into Sunnis, it happened after his hajj. The persecution was stopped only after the intervention of British political officials.

Present History

Present history of Chitral begins in 1819 when Maharaja Ranjit Singh captured Kashmir and handed it over to the Dogras as a reward and later British after the defeat of Khalsa in the Anglo-Sikh wars of 1842-1848 sold it to the same Dogra family. Kashmir under the Ghulab Singh expanded outwards to the territories hence alien to the natives of India. They moved east ward towards the Tibet, northwards towards the Laddakh and west wards towards the Gilgit across

the River Indus. This was the first and till to date the last invading force crossing Indus into Karakoram mountain range. In 1840 Shah Afzal became the Mhtar of Chitral, by 1842 Kashmir durbar had a foothold at Gilgit and became the king makers, a garrison was established at Gilgit as well. The extreme northern states like Hunza and Nagar remained free from these incursions. In the present day Swat there was no state rather a loose conglomeration of khanates like Tanager, Darrel which were rather big in size and located on the western banks of River Indus. Kabul was the major stake holder having a claim to the area of Kashmir as well, thus these small mountainous hamlet states became a battle prize among these two predominant states. It became a religious war among Muslims and Sikhs; Sikhs were religiously tolerant of Muslims and they had the big advantage in having a beard and a turban as part of religion both these items are integral part of western bank of River Indus's cultural heritage and religion. Muslims were also tolerant of other religions like Hindus, Buddhist, Christians and Sikhs however at tribal level the campaigns were seen only as a part of religion therefore the tribes had natural alliance with Kabul. Mountain states north & east of Kabul had more inclination towards the Turkestan. Rivers play key role in the shaping of history, River Gilgit flows in a linear west-east pattern and joins River Indus but River Chitral does not join directly River Indus rather it joins River Bashgol or Kafir River at Aranwai and they form River Kunar which falls into River Kabul ; which ultimately joins River Indus along with River Swat at Nowshehra. The history of region is thus the history of these rivers, a river is formed of many 'gol' and each gol itself represent a distinct valley. In the past the crossing points

were very few on the rivers and caravans tend to remain on one side of the river, these river, gol and waterways acted as the naturally accepted boundaries of families, clans, villages, towns and states; in Chitral the main fort and royal house were constructed on the right bank. Thereby geographically conceding territory on the left bank and associating more with Bashgol[Badakshan]

After the annexation of Punjab in 1849 by the British East India Company {BEIC}, Chitral at that time was ruled by the Kator , there were two distinct families based upon geography who were the ruling elite, the Khuswaqts in the upper Chitral with stronghold at Mastuj and the Kators who were living in the lower Chitral. It was a classical narrative as both had the common blood running in their veins but both trying to extend their hold. Numerous small principalities in the small valleys put their weight behind each family basing upon their chances of success. Murder was common feature to grab the power. Maharaja of Kashmir made a move and had an alliance with the Kator Shah Afzal Mehtar of Chitral in 1854 against the Khuswaqt Gohar Rehman of Mastuj who was attempting to attack Gilgit with the aid of Yasin's ruler. This was the start of Kashmir getting involved into the Chitral's affairs. In 1855 for a short period Chitralis occupied Mastuj but were driven out. On the other hand Shah Afzal Kator died in 1856 and after an intriguing episode his son Aman Ul Mulk became the Mehtar in 1857 and ruled till 1892. He is the father of modern day Chitral. The Khuswaqt of Mastuj had Gilgit under his control from 1848 till 1860 when Sikhs fought it back , Mehtar Aman Ul Mulk tried to keep the Gilgit under his control by force after

the death of Gohar Aman but failed. However the Yarkhun Valley successfully repulsed an attempt by the Mir Muhammad Shah ruler of Badakshan in 1868 to annex the area; a decisive and bloody battle was fought at Durband.

He tried to unite the upper and lower Chitral, expanded his territory which included Gilgit, Ghizar & Thui and Chiga Sarai in present day Afghanistan. Khuswaqts of Mastuj on the other hand remained independent led by Khushwaqt Pahlwan, they made a venture to capture Gilgit in 1880 but the military weakness of Mastuj were once again exposed; in his absence Aman Ul Mulk captured Mastuj and that ends the story of Khuswaqts. Aman Ul Mulk more importantly opened up the country for the British.

British in North. British venture into the north started in 1830 when travellers and foreign department officers disguised as saints and travellers gathered knowledge about the remote north. Names like George Hayward who was murdered in 1870 at Darkot, Mason , Burnes of Bukhara and later George Robertson who was the first British to live in Kafir territory made headlines. Britain established an agency at Gilgit in 1880 with Colonel Biddulph as the political agent but it was short lived. In 1885 the need to understand the western approaches to India were felt. The threat of Russia making an incursion through the Broghul Pass was a distant reality. An army team led by Colonel Lockhart visited Chitral and met Mehtar Aman Ul Mulk.

1891 was another water shed year in the history of northern areas. The Nilt and Hunza valley rulers became embroiled in a clash with the British led by Colonel Durand

with British and Kashmir troops under his command. In December the forts at Nilt were overcome after great dexterity shown by the troops. Chitral remained neutral in this affair; Gilgit Scouts took birth after this expedition and a permanent agency was established at Gilgit with political agent in charge. It must be kept in mind that agency was established at Gilgit but it still remained under the Kashmir control it was only in 1936 that the agency was leased by the British from Kashmir.

In 1892 the Gilgit Agency was again established which also monitored the affairs in Chitral. Chitral after Colonel Lockhart was visited by Colonel Algernon Durand in 1888 and 1889. Chitral or more precisely Aman Ul Mulk played power politics, in the past Chitral had been a subject of Badakshan in a nominal manner and now Kabul asserted the same pressure. Mehtar tried to have a **betrothal** with Kabul but it did not take place, on the other hand when Mehtar felt threatened from Kabul he made an overture towards Kashmir in 1874 which resulted in a kind of pact between two states linking the defence of Chitral with Kashmir; British were the referee; in the end Chitral came under British sphere of influence and this became a bone of contention between the Kabul and Calcutta.

Princely States of India

Chitral, Dir, Swat, Amb, Kalat were princely states, there were very few such states which became part of Pakistan and where Frontier Corps was employed or which became part of it thus it is pertinent to have a brief look at the overall

political system of India. There were two terms , one ‘India’ and other ‘British India’ to denote the present day Pakistan, India and Bangladesh before 1947. British India encompasses all the area which was previously under the British East India Company and after 1857 came under the jurisdiction of Queen Victoria. British parliament appointed a viceroy, usually for a tenure of six-eight years. In India the viceroy was the last word on all affairs, he had a commander in chief of army, a secretary of foreign affairs and other officials. India was divided administratively into provinces which included Bombay{Sind was part of it} Bengal, United Provinces and after 1849 the Punjab; within which the NWFP was created in 1903 but it was not at par with other provinces as it was directly placed under the viceroy due to its strategic position.

Apart from provinces there were over 560 princely states of various size and population , the big states included Hyderabad Deccan , Jammu & Kashmir. Gwalior, Baroda to name few. British gradually moved westward and in this process certain states were annexed like Oudh in 1852 which became a province and many other were left at their own on certain conditions the paramount being , not to indulge or support anti British military campaigns. These states were ruled by princes, although all the states had different titles like raja, rao, nawab,thakur, nizam to name few but British all classified them as princes. Thus ‘ **British India**’ denotes the area which was under British administration in form of provinces and ‘**India**’ represents the princely states. 122 states were directly ruled by the central government from Calcutta {Delhi became capital after 1911} in other over 400 states there were political agents who were responsible to the

provincial governors, commissioners and deputy commissioners. The princes of these states were given subsidy and were allowed certain gun salutes depending upon their importance. Most of the princes were entitled nine gun salutes. States were allowed to have a militia or army with British officers overlooking the affairs. Honorary ranks of lieutenant to general {very rarely} were bestowed upon the princes, states had their own flags and were not bound to follow the British legal system as enforced in British India rather own cultures were followed.

Indian Army and British Army in India also represent two different segments of the army. The regular British army regiments had a tenure of duty in India spanning over five to seven years, they had exclusive all British ranks; they were known as British Army in India. The standard army which took its birth with the BEIC comprising of British Officers and native other ranks was known as Indian Army`. Native officers were given commissioned after First World War. Indian Army had its own commander in chief; there was some discrepancy among the allowances of both armies.

Durand Line & Chitral

In 1893 the agreement was signed by the Afghanistan and British India to have a demarcation of their respective international boundaries.

Chitral differs from other parts of Durand Line because the River Chitral after traversing the territory flows

into the Afghanistan, there are 29 passes that leads to Chitral from Afghanistan starting from Darwaza Pass in the north to the Arandu or Aranwali in the south. Amir Abdur Rehman had agreed: "The province of Wakhan.. had come under my dominion... I renounced my claims on... Dir, Chilas, and Chitral to British for protection .^{xi}. Amir reluctantly took Wakhan but was bitter in giving up his claim on tribes and territories adjacent to River Kunar & River Kabul but in the end he put his signature on treaty which can be regarded as one of the most significant event of 18th Century. A masterpiece of diplomacy because British were weary of the history and thus lacked the conviction and force to impose their will upon Amir yet in the end Secretary of India's Foreign Affairs , Mortimer Durand was able to draw the line which ensured India's natural borders extending as far west as to have physical control of passes leading into India. Chitral physically was not affected by the Durand Line rather it was a blessing in disguise, it now physically separates them from Kabul's culture. Durand had kept the Arandu Pass as the boundary thereby cutting off traditional route of Kabul towards Kashmir.

Trouble initially started with the demarcation at Asmar{close to Arandu} within Afghanistan. Umra Khan of Jandol was another key player he was the son in law of Mehtar Aman ul Mulk, pathan by race he was the chief khan of Lowari Pass. After Aman's death the bloody intrigues for the Mehtar ship started among the various sons of late Aman ul Mulk {he had eighteen sons} finally it was the British weight which made Afzal Ul Mulk triumphant in 1894, it was short lived as Kabul back Sher Afzal soon took the reins after

bloody coup. British now backed Nizam Ul Mulk another son of late Aman ul Mulk this resulted in Sher Afzal leaving the area as he had entered through **Doeah** pass back into Afghanistan.

A British political agent George Robertson was stationed at Chitral. He started his move in January 1893 towards the Chitral from Gilgit Agency with 50 men of 15th Sikh Battalion, Captain Young Husband a famous traveller was his assistant along with Lieutenant Gordon and Bruce. A native by the name Abdul Hakim also accompanied the Robertson. He arrived at Chitral and established himself, he was now the British representative and his main task was to act as a listening post on the northern gates of India.

Hindukush range is in fact one single mountain range which extends from Gilgit 'Where Three Empires Meet'. Hindukush is the name given to western part of Karakorum by Ibn-Battuta in 1334, 'because so many slaves, male and female, brought from India die on the passage of this mountain owing to the severe cold and quantity of snow'. Hindukush forms part of Pakistan –Afghanistan border from Mintaka Pass in the extreme North {not part of Chitral district} to the Dorah pass in south west from where it runs along the crest of the Kafir Spur to the Aranwai where Chitral river joins with Bashgol River. In the years to come this demarcation became a source of agitation . Another important pact reached in same time period was the pamir Agreement of March 1895 under which the Afghanistan-Russian frontier at Pamir were agreed upon which integrates ten odd miles of Wakhan strip thus separating Chitral from Russia. On 9th

April 1895 the boundary demarcation of the area between Mohmand country and the Bashgol valley was concluded under which the frontier was agreed to be upon the eastern watershed of Bashgol River ‘ Whole course of the Lanadi Sin from its source to its junction with the Kunar lay through Kafiristan which belonged to the Amir, he had agreed to leave to the Amir the small strip of country on the eastern bank of the river between Sao and Arnawari , as it might have led to friction, if the Kafirs had to serve two master.’^{xii}

Chitral Siege; 3rd March – 19th April, 1895.

After the death of Mehtar Aman Ul Mulk on 30th August 1892, anarchy erupted into Chitral. Prince Afzal ul Mulk , one among his sixteen sons took the reins of power after killing his three brothers and declared himself as the Mehtar, Prince Nizam ul Mulk the eldest son trekked to Gilgit to seek British help in getting Mehtarship. Meanwhile , Sher Afzal one of the brother of late Aman Ul Mulk attacked Chitral and killed Afzal ul Mulk and declared himself as the Mehtar. Amidst all this chaos British provided military aid to Prince Nizam ul Mulk who marched from Gilgit and defeated Sher Afzal in Battle of Drasan, Sher Afzal escaped to Afghanistan. British recognised the winner as the Mehtar of Chitral. Mehtar Nizam had little time to enjoy his labour, two years of rule, but in this brief period he invited British military mission to visit Chitral resultantly in May 1893 a small detachment with Captain Young husband was left at Chitral on 1st January 1895 Mehtar Nizam ul Mulk was shot

dead at Broze while hawking on the instigation of his nineteen years old half brother Amir ul Mulk^{xiii}. Lieutenant Gordon the assistant political agent at Chitral was not certain about the impact and seek clarification from his superiors, in the mean time the young rebel lost patience and looked upon his sister's husband ' Napoleon of Pathans' Umra Khan of Jandol for help. Umra Khan a Pathan, had already descended down from Lowari along with his 1200 followers few days before the assassination of Mehtar Nizam ul Mulk; his declared aim was to eliminate the Kafirs of Kafiristan, he tried to bully the young Mehtar Amir ul Mulk in joining hands with him in such a noble cause but Amir refused resultantly Umra Khan laid siege to Drosh fort {also known as Chitarli Fort} which fell to him on 9th February 1895, Umra Khan also had the Chitral Fort in Narsat across Arandu inside Afghanistan^{xiv}.

Lieutenant Gordon the assistant political officer at Chitral {Gordon was under command of Gilgit Political Officer} in a counter move sent a SOS message to Major George Robertson the British political agent at Gilgit some 220 miles away. Major George marched from Gilgit with an escort of 400 troops, still believing that everything will be settled soon. George Robertson had negotiations with Amir Ul Mulk, who demanded immediate recognition of him as Mehtar for the cessation of hostilities; Umra Khan simply ignored the warning from George Robertson to leave the Chitral. The powder keg finally exploded on 28th February 1895 when Umra Khan Jandol and Prince Afzal Shah joined hands to physically evict the British. Mehtar Amir Ul Mulk was already placed under close arrest inside the fort by Major

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George Robertson and fourteen years old Shuja Ul Mulk was installed as Mehtar of Chitral. It was pure politics with a spice of religious fervour. It also speaks about the military culture of the area as in 1892 the Hunza & Nagar had fought a hard pitched campaign against the Colonel Algernon 's Gilgit Agency troops to preserve their integrity and suzerainty however in the end they went down fighting; now it was Chitral's turn. Kabul did not interfered openly in Chitral's affairs but it was covertly supporting Umra Khan and Kashmir State was fully backing the British.

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The British officers ^{xv} { Major Surgeon George Robertson, Captain Colin Campbell, Captain C. Townsend, Lieutenant H. Harley, Captain Surgeon Whitchurch, Captain Baird and Lieutenant Gordon} and their escort which comprised of 100 Sikh sowars of 14 Sikh Regiment and 300 sepoys of Kashmir infantry apart from 27 servants and 11 followers left Gilgit on 15th January 1895 and were inside the Chitral fort on 31st January along with 52 loyal Chitralis. By evening 28th February 1895 they were threatened and they timely got behind the safety of the fort before Umra Khan & Sher Afzal close the rope around their necks. Captain Campbell a hot blooded Scott overrode the aged wisdom of Major George Robertson and rode out of fort on 3rd March 1895, accompanied by Captain Baird his best friend with a sizeable force for an encounter with the enemy. By evening he was wounded along with thirty two other fellow soldiers and souls of twenty three loyal soldiers had already departed while fighting for survival on the battle field. On 4th March , Captain Baird took his last breath inside the fort, he had sustained serious wounds in yesterday's encounter 500 odd

demoralised men were now compressed within the twenty five feet high and eight feet thick walls, measuring eighty square yards; it was a living cold hell. Food was short, heating arrangements barely sufficient, fodder insufficient but ammunition was enough, major flaw in the defence were the thick, high trees around fort which allows good sniping positions to enemy. There were loyal troops pouring in from Gilgit, 102 were at Mastuj and other hundred odd were enroute to Mastuj from Gilgit with another 100 in reserves at Gilgit.

Reshun & Kuragh . Chitral Fort held out for well over a month under persistent dangers waiting for relief. The first disaster came from unexpected corner, the follow up troops{60 soldiers, 40 coolies and two British officers} at Mastuj while marching towards Chitral on 7th March with 40,000 rounds of ammunition were ambushed at Reshun{near Booni}. For a week the two officers Lieutenants Edwardes & Fowler held out at Reshun, Lieutenant Fowler was already wounded on the very first day of ambush. In the end both officers were made hostage by Sher Afzal which further aggravated the situation for Major George Robertson. On hearing about the ambush at Reshun, the remaining British troops at Mastuj under Captain Ross and Lieutenant Jones also marched towards Reshun on 8th March with 93 soldiers and one native officer. Close to Reshun, Captain Ross left a party at Booni and went ahead with 33 soldiers to relieve his besieged brothers in arms at Reshun, they reached Kuragh which is short of Reshun , Captain Ross was also ambushed rather trapped in a narrow defile , he never made out of the trap alive despite heroic deeds by Lieutenant Jones. Captain

Ross died on 10th March , only Lieutenant Jones and seventeen men survived the ordeal^{xvi}.

Lieutenant Colonel Kelly's March from Gilgit – Chitral

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It was on 7th March 1895 that world came to know about the Chitral and it became an instant hit with newspapers who are always looking for such episodes. The relief forces came from Gilgit{ Colonel Kelly with } and Peshawar{ Major General Sir Robert Low with twelve infantry battalions, two cavalry regiments, four batteries of mountain artillery with usual supplement of Sappers & Miners. Brigadier General Anderson}, it was almost replica of Kabul of 1842, only this time the residency was still intact and waiting for relief forces. It was this suspense which created the headlines in England and in Empire which made Chitral famous in military history. Everything was in favour of the besiegers especially the weather and the geography. This was the first British military expedition beyond Peshawar towards Chitral; there was no knowledge about the area . Resultantly on 21st March 1895, Lieutenant Colonel Kelly was ordered to move immediately from Gilgit 220 miles in east towards the Chitral and wait for the Peshawar Division. Colonel Kelly had four hundred men of Pioneer battalion who were primarily enrolled and trained as 'road constructors', Kelly had to cross the 12500 feet Shandur Pass almost 135 miles west of Gilgit in winter and Sir Low had to negotiate the 10500 feet Lowari Pass at the end of his 200 miles march crossing passes and inhabited by hostile and militant tribes; a logistic nightmare. Kelly crossed snowline at Ghizar on 31st March and Shandur Pass on

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4th April, a march worth appreciating. 13th April sunrise saw Kelly crossing Mastuj River, no serious resistance was encountered so far by him except the weather.

However at Nisa Gol which is eight miles down stream of Mastuj , a decisive encounter took against rebel Isa Khan and his 1200 men on 14th April; Kelly was able to advance forward shrugging off Isa Khan. 17th April 1895 stands out as a day of envious bravery and chivalry , Sher Afzal had decided to physically attack the fort and for this a mine was being put under the fort wall which was detected in the nick of time about twenty meters away from the wall. The complete defence of the fort was in jeopardy, only a quick and brave action could save the inevitable. Lieutenant Harley led the raid to destroy the mine and in the process this young man sacrificed his own life to make sure that the mine is destroyed; he succeeded in his mission. Umra Khan fled from the scene as soon as his last trump card of mine was blown into air. Kelly was able to ford the River Chitral on 19th April 1895 thus ended the siege of Chitral. Both these columns in the end reach their destination the Chitral Fort, an impressive display of military leadership, planning, discipline, training and morale. Afzal Khan and Amir Ul Mulk were arrested and deported to India

In the end it was lack of leadership on part of Umra Khan and Mehtar along with real politicks which allowed the Kelly's force to reach Chitral in the nick of time to save the day; Low took some time to reach Chitral.

The classic act of frontier romance, a mountainous kingdom besieged by the wicked ruler and tribes

and held out by a brave and loyal force of natives led by British officers, few casualties, no major clash or massive bloodbath. It was only at Chitral where after 1857 that the act of Lucknow Residency was re-enacted with a happy ending, that is how Chitral Siege has gone down in the frontier history. It was different from Hunza & Nagar campaign as no Victoria Cross was awarded. It had a strategic implication had the Umra Khan of Jandol the most able and famous of the Pathan Khans been successful in his campaign to have Chitral under his influence then the British would have received a serious dent in the Forward Policy

In the aftermath of Chitral Siege of 1895, a new political agency was formed known as , Dir & Swat political agency with its headquarters at Malakand, Chitral was added to it a year later in 1896. Thus an assistant political officer used to manage the affairs of the Chitral; before this it was the political agency of Gilgit which was looking after the British interest in the state. It should be kept in mind that in 1891 under the Mehtar Aman ul Mulk the Chitral had agreed to hand over its foreign affairs mainly the relationship with the Afghanistan to the British.

Chitral Levies were raised in 1899 by the assistant political agent at Chitral; it was his personal escort and force to implement the orders, it had a strength of 100 men . Mehtar had his own bodyguards numbering over 200 and there was no regular army of Mehtar; there was one British army unit along with two guns which was stationed at Chitral. They had built a new fort a mile west and up of old fort which was besieged. Chitral Levies thus perform the duties of border

military police as well, Ziarat, Mirkani and Arandu were the three initial posts of Chitral Levies.

Chitral Scouts Officers Mess.

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The present day Chitral Scouts Officers Mess is known as Petako Gaz in Chitrali language , it has a history many many years ago thee was a khonza {the royal princess} who came here and left her dupaatta here and when she went back to the palace she remembered her cloak and mentioned it to her attendants and gave the direction to the place as well, in Chitrali language Petako Gaz means a place whee princess forgot her veil. The present location was at one time part of Mehatr's property and even now the national Gol park almost stars from where the mess finishes.

Petako gaz is in almost seven layers or tiers of ground which have been levelled enough to construct the building. The original building of the mess was constructed in 1903 and from then till 1990 it remained in its original shape for the reason that Chitarl Scouts itself moved out from here and established headquarter at Drosh and it was only in 1995 that they came back to this Mess again. Many additions have been carried out but the original design has been left intact, credit goes to the commandants for maintaining the original layout which is more or less like Swiss dacha .

The most notorious stone on frontier is here the 'laying stone of Captain Boono'. Mess presently has apart from two original gusetrooms known as Birir and Rumbor almost a dozen other guest rooms and living quarters for the adjutant and one wing commander, accommodation for mess

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staff, signal detachment and security guards. There is a diesel generator, one hydel power which was commissioned in August 2013, gymnasium, library and Billiard room. One clay court tennis court at tier two, one squash court at tier three are also there. There is one mosque as well.

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Mess have two main halls which are rectangular in design, one is used as dining room and other as ante room having television facility; in old days there used to be a piano and radio followed by radiogram.

In 2002 the guest room charges were rupees 200 per night for lieutenant colonels and above and rupees 150/ night for all others while on leave at Chitral Mess. Mess in order to maintain its decorum usually bans the entrance of children under twelve on official functions. Chitral Scouts have one peculiar issue almost all their official inspection and tour takes place in summer time mainly due to blocking of road movement in winter thus they have heavy load of guests in summer therefore it is always advisable to have advance booking here.

September 5th 2013- Major Langlands School .

I am back to Chitral Scouts and Chitral once again; this time the circumstances are different, I came here primarily because I got a text from Carey Schoffield who is the principal of Major Langland School at Chitral and I had

met her once in the last visit and quite impressed with her efforts , academic credentials{ Oxford & Cambridge} and above all her personality she is in mid fifties but quite attractive and I think she thinks and acts like a Victorian era lady but it suits her. To my mind she fulfils the empty and void of Frontier where so far no lady has made her marks in a more dignified manner

Any way I got from the Landi Kotal with the commandant Khyber Rifles and then got hold of a taxi {fare 9500rupees} but for a noble cause it is worth it. Driver an Afghan Sameen , well by dinner time we were at the Chitral Mess passing through the Malakand and crossed Lowari Top , weather was good and road also good. Security on road is appreciable. I remember meeting two havildar of 31 Baluch at the base of Lowari, and I am motivated by his words ‘ that our forefathers sacrificed their lives so I can be free today , now it is my turn’. The excitement of coming day was intense , I was constantly sending the messages to Carey informing about my location , she invited me for breakfast next day. I made a commitment with the driver to pick me up next day at 0630 hours , but neither he came nor the waiter brought my clothes from ironing, in the end I got the clothes and got hold of a new taxi and managed to reach the Hindukush heights by 0720 , five minutes late.

In the school it was opposite to my expectations but good, I had to give a five minute talk to the school in the assembly , I did by getting on to the flag post and speaking in loud but powerful voice, telling the boys how important freedom is , why we are celebrating defence day, the nobility

of the profession of soldiering and so on , later I sang the national anthem with them and then realized that these boys are in fact keeping words with me and very few know the national anthem {same as in our school days}. Then the day was spent with the teachers, giving talks to three classes one by one, tea with school staff and another talk with Carey mostly about Alvi's death circumstances. I drove with her to the hotel and realized that she wants me to go back without having lunch, but I just wanted to say hello to Major Siraj . I realized that probably Carrey did not want me to meet the Siraj , may be it is my own mind but I could feel something in the air. I did not had the breakfast so when I was invited by Carey for lunch I accepted it, another person Mr Arif Habib also joined in he had arrived just today{5th September} and seems to be old acquaints of Carey because she had embraced him although only customarily but she did and she did not did that with me. Anyway lunch was ok , I don't like the food in Chitral after the food of Khyber. Moreover I have noticed that these Chitralis are less hospitable than the Khyberis. I just talk about history and realized that Carey has very little knowledge about it , her field is English anthology { I have made a note to ask what is it}. But by and large Carey is a respectful person and I admire her being here in Chitral , I have always considered her since I have met her to be a Victorian era romantic mem sahibha. Her transport dropped me at the Chitral Mess. I am conscious of petrol prices and as such don't like being dropped or picked by Carey's vehicle but irony is that I can go there at hotel in a taxi{fare rupees 800} but there is no such thing to come back thus by force I have to accept it.

Friday

Well the actual defence day is today and I managed to reach the Chitral Scouts fort in their vehicle although I missed the vehicle taking the adjutant Major Kazmi, it was nice to see him, commandant is new but he had gone to Mirkhani for reconnaissance and conference. Chitral Scouts look good in their headgear of local cap with plume. I sat in adjutant office and same mental frustration which seems to be the hall mark of the Chitral Scouts,' sir commandant is away and when he will come only then we can extend help in history data' nothing wrong with this sentence but I know the background so I just sat quietly hearing what all is going around. Almost all officers were sitting there Captain Nazar of 148 AD he is from Gilgit, Captain Hamdan is from Guides he has been promoted since our last meeting and a real good officer, the doctor the DDMS. Cup of tea and I was on listening watch, constant telephone rings, constant scouts or subedars marching in , television on mute, mobile .

The issue seems to be the threat of miscreants from across the border , an interception has been made on their communication network along with source report which is the cause of ripple, then a Moulvi has made a speech in mosque calling for elimination of Ismailis from Chitral and he has been called by police, the scouts want him to be put behind bars but police says that there is no such law for this. I recall even in Chaklala garrison last year the Moulvi in the mosque called for action against the shias but nothing was done against him, any action and that Moulvi will become a hero overnight. The army {17 division} is in charge of the

district but the problem is that for all practical purpose the district is settled and there is no imposition of any regulations which states that it is under the army thus a great mass of confusion is in the air. There was a small gathering of college boys in front of the deputy commissioner's office protesting for lack of water and electricity in the college, that is the right of the boys and this is what they or every one does in this age but orders going out from the adjutant office was to disperse them immediately before the army headquarters start interfering in it. The two men walked in one was SSP of the city{investigation} and he wanted one of his relative to be discharged from service and adjutant agreed to put up the case to the commandant on his arrival on Monday but warned the individual that he will have to spend few days in scouts jail as well on which the individual agreed.

I gave my camera to the photographer to take pictures, the Bara Khana was at 1230 hours and I was wondering whether I will be allowed or invited in it, with every minute my opinion about the Chitral Scouts was getting worse and worse, it seems that clerks here are very powerful and bit arrogant as well. Well then another message regarding the perceived movement of the miscreants, a lieutenant colonel of military intelligence was also there it was his second day he is from 31 Punjab , a good man, he was also sitting in the office, the news was that some Wazir and Nazir are planning to carry out an attack on the Pakistani post close to Arandu, the weapons have been seen and messages on air confirm it also. Now the Taliban if I can use the word are intelligent enough and at times just by sending false messages they can create a false ripple in the security organizations and

unfortunately then all focus gets onto the position mentioned by Taliban in communication and very conveniently the Taliban strike at other place, in my opinion the Ismaili are the target and they live in upper Chitral so let's see what happens. Adjutant then announced to the Subedar Barkat that officers are too committed so they cannot attend the bara khana and therefore their food should be send to the officers tae bar. I requested adjutant to attend the bara khana as it will allow me to have interaction with scouts ; adjutant had no excuse but to allow me .

I was taken by the Subedar Barkat, the tent/qannat was pitched in the western part of the fort, it was still in progress so the BHM took me on around of the area, we went to the JCO's Mess and I had a visit inside, not in a good state , it seems that no one has taken meal here in months or years, same as in Khyber. I met the education JCO who is a n educated person wearing pant/shirt and tie , he has written two books one regarding the women education in Chitral other a novel, I like him he is also the principal of Chitral public school . He mentioned about one scout who is writing the history of Chitral Scout I was almost immediately keen to meet him but he said he will find it. Bara Khana was an experience and all my apprehensions about Chitral Scouts turned out to be true. No spoons no glasses , a rush on food like Punjabi village wedding scene, nothing militarily about it , reason absence of officers and lack of meat in daily diet; anyway I was genuinely upset with the behaviour.

Back to the office area met the quarter master who asked me whether I am still here since my first visit or have I

come again , a good and intelligent question , I remained quiet. Food inside the tea bar was fantastic, same food as in troops table but here it was in abundance and in a manner that it looked nice, I declined to eat as I had taken meal with troops but in my heart of heart I did not liked this gesture of officers to have food separately even on this day, now the jig saw pieces of Chitral Scouts puzzle are getting into places. The adjutant announced that a book has arrived just now which is on Chitral Scouts history, it is the same book which the education JCO was mentioning, I was really excited and it was thee in Urdu and a short glance told me it is nothing new from the past data yet two-three incidents are new. Chitral Scouts seems to be having a history of doing mutiny, they did it in 1973 when they were told that other qaums will also be joining the Chitral scouts, they were at Drosh Qila then , Lieutenant Ccolonel Afzal was the commandant the one who wrote a small pamphlet on Chitral as well, the scouts led by the subedar major then marched from Drosh, occupied Chitral fort and watered the airfield and helipad {polo ground} IGFC Brigadier Naseerullah Babar acme from Peshawar and had to stand on the helicopter for negotiations with the scouts. The strategic importance of Chitral with hostile Afghanistan was too immense to take this affair lightly , at the end the scouts won it they signed an agreement with the IGFC with subedar major and the ruling prince as witness under which no other qaum is allowed to serve in Chitral Scouts,' amazing feat.

Next mutiny took place in mid nineties when again the Chitral contingent which was part of a FC Week developed a rift with the wing commander and in the end the contingent was called back to Drosh and court of inquiry

conducted and IGFC Major General Ghazi ud Din Rana later gave punishment to over 64 scouts, ranging from seven days to 28 days RI, reduction of ranks, and dismissal from service of the subedar majors. No such steps were taken in 1973. The dismissed subedars later served terms in civil jail and few years later were given the old ranks pension. Now these are rare scenes and unprecedented in nature. It only highlights how important is the subedar major and how vital it is for the officer to keep an eye on the pulse of the things, both mutinies reminds me of Gilgit Rebellion of 1947, almost a replica. In the evening I saw the games of Chitral Scouts and it was only on sports field that one feels good about them. Riding of two horses, Chitral Scouts have horses but no riding school. Cricket and football, people just watching and relaxing, looks very good. I developed bit of respect for them now, got Chitral scouts badges from canteen. On my way back I wanted to get down in the city to buy ink pot but adjutant did not allow me to go walking and made sure the vehicle takes me to bazaar and brings back to mess, a kind gesture. In the bazaar no ink pot, no shop was open due to Friday. Another good aspect is the Pakistan's recovery at Harare in the first test where Younis scored double hundred and saved Pakistan from a defeat.

Later I sent an text to Carey and have yet to receive the answer back , probably another miss text from me. Let's see. I had a good conversation with Lance Naik Nazir the library in charge , he has a master degree in islmayiat and is currently doing bachelor of education, I remember how he traced the missing library books , I like him. He gave me some appears and promised to write more.

Chitral Scouts -1903- 1947. Chapter II

Chitral Scouts {CS} were raised in 1903 the very year boundary between Gilgit and Chitral were settled, on the recommendation of the political agent Captain McMahan. At that time Chitral, Drosh, Chakdara, Malakand, Drazinda and Jandola in South Waziristan were the only places in agencies where there were British regular army battalions stationed. That speaks itself of the importance of the Chitral, Dir and Swat agency. The strength of British garrison at Chitral had been reduced to one infantry battalion along with sappers and a section of artillery. This strength remained at Chitral till 1942. Thus Chitral Scouts were raised to protect the line of communication from Lowari to Drosh; moreover in Upper Chitral it was to act as listening post.

The Chitral Scouts were raised as classical militia; comprised entirely of local population which would train only for one month a year and rest of the year perform their normal task. This is what Machiavelli^{xvii} had propounded in 15th century and it was adopted in Chitral in entirety.

Strength was 1200, which means that this number will be given training, they were called for training and manning of post in batches of two hundred for a duration of one month each year. They were provided with Martin Snider rifles but were not allowed to take them home, ten rounds per rifle per scout was the first line ammunition. Two British officers remained in command. Headquarters were at Chitral where a fort was already constructed in 1895. Pay and allowances

were shared by the political agent and the Mehtar Shuja Ul Mulk, who was also installed as the honorary commandant of Chitral Scouts, Shuja remained in this honorary position till 1936 when he died after a rule of 41 years. Thus his stint as honorary colonel commandant spans over 33 years the longest in Pakistan's military history. It was a continuity of history that traditionally the Mehtar was installed as the honorary colonel commandant. On raising, the initial batch of scouts mostly from Upper Chitral were given extensive training in drill for which the drill instructors from the regular British army unit stationed at Chitral were borrowed. Firing was the main thrill for the recruits if they can be call recruits. Air was informal and so was the routine. Polo was a major attraction in the evening when the scouts would show their prowess. Watching them play polo was a treat and lesson in war itself, fearless gallops after a ball the control over the ponies and coordination between the hand and eye while galloping speaks volumes of military traits; it was only a question of harnessing these.

Mehtar of Chitral were given few snider rifles by the Lochart Mission in 1885, exact number was not known, however out them 123 rifles and carbines were recovered from Mehtar after the disturbances of 1892-95; these rifles were now made over new to the Mehtar in 1908 alongwith 2400 rounds. Later another fifty rifles were given by the government to Mehtar in 1910^{xviii}. It was around this arms aid that Chitral state Bodyguards were raised.

Mehtar meanwhile initiated a programme of openness; he was invited and visited Calcutta in 1899, at

Peshawar Vice Regal's Durbar in 1902 and at Coronation Durbar at Delhi in 1903. Mastuj and Upper Chitral including Laspur and Yarkhun were made part of Chitral territory with Mehtar of Chitral entering into a pact with the natives in 1909. In true sense the state of Chitral took birth after this. For centuries both halves have retained their identity, Mastuj although ruled by the same bloodline as in Chitral had political & military rivalry with the main town Chitral; presence of overwhelming Ismailis was another key factor. In the end the political agents of Gilgit and Chitral mutually agreed upon the interstate boundaries which roughly runs over the Shandur Pass. Gilgit had more complicated political system, it was part of Kashmir State yet the frontier fiefdoms of Yasin & Gupis were relatively independent in nature.

Chitral's Annual Relief.

British garrison which was stationed at the Chitral amounted to two infantry regiments, one company of miners and sappers, one section of two guns; deployed at Chitral and Drosh Killa . A line of communication was opened from Mardan through Malakand, Chakdara, Dir via Lowari to Drosh ; it was the responsibility of Khan of Dir to keep it open in his area for which he was given subsidy as well. Dir Levies were raised in 1897 for this purpose they were under command of the Khan of Dir. Similarly levies were also raised at Malakand known as Malakand Levies. This garrison was annually relieved utilizing this route. It was only in 1936 that the first ever relief using motor vehicles was utilized, the road from Chakdara was vastly improved by then still Lowari had to be crossed on foot. RAF from 1929 onwards started

providing air lift and in 1937 an aerial relief was carried out in the winter when passes remained close. Chitral Scouts initially had to look after the three posts namely Ziarat, Mirkani and Arandu.

Regiments stationed as far as Bangalore were moved to Chitral. Some regiments were required to adopt route march till a railhead and then to Nowshetra, where as the relieved battalions had to march from Drosh till Nowshetra. In most of the cases the relieved battalions were stationed at Abbottabad after their tenure at Chitral. The Peshawar Division was responsible for the conduct with general officer commanding required to be physically present at Chakdara for the whole duration which took ten days both ways. Political agent of Swat, Malakand & Chitral was responsible for the local provisions of grain. Ice camps were also established on the advice of medical officers. Scale of ration and equipment was also altered; for troops going to Chitral were authorized to have three pair of shoes and two pair of socks. Importantly great coats were also issued individually otherwise at normal stations they were authorized 33 coats in one infantry company. Followers were also allowed to have 20 seers of luggage and they were issued one pair of socks apart from the No.3 Shoe.

Third Afghan War 1919.

The war itself was not focused on Chitral sector, this sector differs from all other in a sense that it is inhabited by non Pathan tribes who do not share the common language with rest of combatants of the war. However purely from military geography Afghanistan had much more chances of

success here in Chitral than anywhere else. Afghanistan had kept its words during the Great War 1914-1918 but then the chain of events inside Afghanistan necessitated launching of a war 'Jihad' by Kabul ; which it did in the summer of 1919 with great dexterity and achieved stunning results in Waziristan sector.

Chitral in the summer of 1919 was a peaceful garrison, the lone infantry regiment was stationed at Drosh, Chitral Scouts itself had only one company in the summer to train with or for manning of the posts. May has been a month of almost all major events in subcontinent thus it was in May 1919 that Amir Amanullah broke his relations with British India because it had delayed in accepting his kingship and more so politically to have the public support in his favour which is so vital in country like Afghanistan and what better way than to have Jihad; tribes became electric with the prospect of an all out war against the infidel British. Mehtar of Chitral also received one such firman from Amanullah on 8th May 1919 through the military governor of Afghan Asmar province Brigadier Muhammad Usman Khan; Mehtar Shuja Ul Mulk rejected the offer and kept his side of pact with the British intact. It was a very wise step of diplomacy. The war bugle was sounded and Chitral prepared itself for an attack of Afghanistan.

Chitral Garrison comprised of 1/11th Rajputtana Regiment with 450 bayonet strength it was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel F.C.S. Samborne who was also the commander of all armed forces in Chitral which comprised apart from his regiment, a company of sappers and section of

guns ex 23 mountain battery, along with 1000 scouts of Chitral; they had been called up for the service. Chitral Scouts were being commanded by Captain Crimmin with Lieutenant Byres as the British officer.

Chitral was divided into eight districts each under an 'aatlique' responsible for collection of revenues and also head of the local scouts, it was his responsibility to collect the men for training and sent them to the Drosh . Under every aatlique there was a 'charwelo' responsible for a group of villages within a valley, each village itself had the Baramush the head . It was the Baramush who was the first ladder of the Chitral Scouts organization. Now these aataliques gathered the trained men . Chitral Scouts were under the political command of assistant political agent Major N.F. Reilly who started mobilizing on 5th May 1919.

Company of scouts was initially deployed at Galapach six miles downstream of Mirkani, aim was to keep an eye on the Arandu pass. Mehtar on the other hand had sent his various sons along with his body guards on various passes also. Initial Afghan movement started from 12th May onwards, they captured Arandu and soon the Scouts position at Galapach was over ran by 600 strong Afghans, scouts retreated to Mirkani. Afghans were certainly moving forward with an aim to capture the Mirkani and close the Lowari Pass.

Clash at Mirkani.

On 14th May 1919, Major Reilly along with two companies of Chitral Scouts arrived at Mirkani from Drosh. The retreating scouts were also harnessed and together these

three companies put up a courageous attack on the Galapach position and reoccupied it; fighting continued the whole day. In another classical display of fighting the scouts along with 50 men of Mehtar bodyguard under command Major Reilly put up another attack on the Kauti feature which was across the river and source of permanent irritation for the Galapach position the objective was achieved within hours on 16th May. Afghan strength at Arandu was estimated to be over 600 supported by four artillery guns and a large tribal lashkar, apart from Arandu the afghans were in control of Bashgol and Birkot valleys

On 21st May 1919 in the overall plan the one company of Chitral Scouts were amalgamated with the Mehtar's bodyguard in an attack on the above mentioned positions. Two companies of Chitral Scouts under command Lieutenant Byres of Scouts pressed forward on the right bank and two companies on left bank under their commandant. Subsequently Byres moved forward, on 22nd May he had a temporary bridge thrown over the river in which the scouts were expert in doing so, Lieutenant Byres moved ahead to face Afghans at Darashot but to his dismay they had vacated the post before his arrival. {Almost hundred years later in 2011, Afghans again attacked this post.}

Battle of Birkot - 23rd May 1919.

Almost entire British garrison at Chitral was present at the battle of Birkot, a small town inside the Afghan province of Asmar where the bulk of Afghans were concentrated. Battle opened up on 23rd May at 0700 hours with own artillery opening up, the Rajputana and Chitral

Scouts carried out the advance and by 1400 hours the Afghans started retreating from Arandu. Afghan resisted was mainly in the form of sniping. Chitral Scouts lost eight men and another 23 were wounded. After the action the Afghans started reinforcing themselves thus the political administration of Chitral very wisely decided to retreat back into own areas thus the two companies of Chitral Scouts were left at Mirkani Piquet and remainder took position inside Drosh Fort along with other elements .

On 3rd June 1919 the armistice was signed between the British India and Afghan government. However the situation at Chitral remained precarious with Afghan General Wakil Khan planning to move into the Chitral; thus two companies of Chitral Scouts and few men of Mehtar bodyguards were stationed at Ayun and one company was also sent to Lotkoh Valley. On 17th July 1919 an Afghan attack came upon Bambouret Valley via Zanol Pass and advanced to a mile of the Bambouret Village. Afghans had a complete control of all passes starting from Zidig Pass in the north to the Brambolu Pass in the south. Lowari Pass was also threatened by 500 odd Afghan tribesmen with menacing posture towards the Ziarat Post. Lieutenant Byres with two companies of Chitral Scouts physically attacked this conglomeration of tribesmen and pushed them back. The situation in Chitral started coming back to normalcy after signing of the treaty at Rawalpindi on 8th August 1919; thus ended the first blood of Chitral Scouts from which it emerged as a victor. Three scouts were awarded with posthumous award of Indian Order of Merit, one with Military Cross, one

with distinguished Service Order and two each with Indian Distinguished Service Medal and Title of Khan Sahib.

More importantly the concept of Scouts in Chitral, so different from the other militias proved a success. Unlike North Waziristan Militia and South Waziristan Militia along with Khyber Rifles where mass defection took place, there was not even one defection among the ranks of Chitral Scouts. Being entirely composed of one qaum it had its own advantages which proved so good in this conflict.

Chitral Scouts - 1930.

The Mehtar was knighted after the Third Anglo-Afghan War, his subsidy was also increased and above all he was entitled to 11 guns salute now. British thus in an effort to lessen the financial burden upon the state undertook the proposal to reorganize the Chitral Scouts in this background. There were 9 companies of Chitral Scouts at the end of the 1919 but these were gradually reduced and by 1930 there were six companies which were further reduced to 4 companies. The reduction was carried out after a detailed study^{xix}. Each company had four platoons with two subedar, eight havildars, eight naiks and 200 temporarily naiks or soldiers. Thus each subedar to command two platoons or half company with a havildar designated as platoon commanders. The subedar and havildar were bound to undergo one additional month of training apart from the one month which they were supposed to undertake with their company. Each company itself to undergo one month training. On the financial side a reduction of 109 men all ranks was carried out. Companies were named as Lasper Mulikho company,

Full Moon at Chitral

Turikho company, Mastuj company, Kuff Company and Lutkoh half company.

Chitral Scouts had strength of four and half companies at the beginning of 1931. Pay in 1930 was as follow, a subedar was getting rupees 50/ per month where as a havildar was getting rupees 15/, a naik rupees 12/ and sepoy rupees 10/per month. Ration allowance was given at a rate of Rs 9/ pm, the subedar major apart from his pay was given an annual allowance of Rs 25/. Clerk was a highly paid trade with a pay of Rs 120 per month, armourer was paid Rs 45, religious teacher was getting Rs 10, and gardener was being paid Rs 9 per month. The strength of Chitral Scouts was as follow, eight subedars, 32 havildars, 32 naiks, 64 lance naiks and 736 sepoy. There were four chowkidars as well who were being paid at Rs 15 per month, there was a pupil teacher also. The total cost of maintaining Chitral Scouts was Rupees 81,324 out of which pay of officers was 25,569 rupees and balance was the pay of establishment.^{xx} In 1931 new high velocity rifles were introduced in Chitral Scouts

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Gilgit Scouts, Great Game & Gilgit Agency. 1936

The political and military rivalry of European continent also had its effects on the sub continental politics, initially British had apprehensions about the Napoleon's advance towards the India which were later replaced by the Russians after the treaty of Vienna in 1815 A.D. By this time in history the area west of present day Afghanistan was a conglomeration of independent small valley states all Islamic

in nature like Khiva and Merv^{xxi}, these were captured by the Russians therefore British in order to keep an eye on the affairs wanted to have a listening posts thus the Gilgit campaign of 1892 followed by Chitral in 1895.

In 1935 British India and Maharaja Harri Singh signed a lease under which Gilgit Agency {including Hunza} was taken on 60 years lease by the Raj, the Gilgit Scouts were already raised in 1915, consisting of local natives {six hundred in number} commanded by the British officers and mainly funded by the J&K State; posting of British officers in Gilgit scouts was the domain of British Army and Frontier Corps had nothing to do with it. However now in 1936, under the lease the Gilgit Scouts came under administrative control of Frontier Corps and officers were inter posted among the corps. Gilgit Scouts similar to Chitral Scouts are non Pashtu speaking and have identical cultures with Chitral., there was no native ruling elite. Gilgit comprised of many small mountainous fiefdoms , thinly populated, economically poor. Its geography is also identical with Chitral, few miles west of Gilgit Airport the river confluence in same patten as in Chitral. The upper Gilgit is also Ismaili followers by faith.

Chitral retained its strategic position, a road was greatly improved between the Chakdara and motor transport was used for annual relief till Dir. Commander in Chief paid a visit to the Chitral and Chitral Scouts in 1936. The road move was a tedious and dangerous manoeuvre with constant air support and piqueting of the route. Dir Levies were up to the task. Air relief was carried in the winter of 1936-37 when aircraft taking off from Risalpur would land at Drosh within

an hour. Heavy pieces of artillery were flown from Rawalpindi which included 3.7inch howitzer. For seven years Mehtar Nasir ul Mulk reigned Chitral and in his tenure the Chitral opened up a little bit towards the Afghanistan in terms of timber trade.. Mehtar was an enlighten ruler having served with a British regiment for an year , he was the ideal; he politically united Chitral with Dir by marrying the daughter of Nawab of Dir. Mehtar Nasir ul Mulk was given the honorary rank of major in the British Indian Army.

Chitral State Scouts- 1942- 1956. Chapter III

In 1942 the last of British soldier left the Chitral, for they were required at more important places due to swinging fortunes of Second Great War which at time were placed heavily against the British. In the same year the nomenclature of Chitral Scouts was changed into Chitral State Scouts, it now became the regular forces of the Chitral State and placed under the Frontier Corps administrative control. The two northern most gates of India{ Chitral & Gilgit} thus became the responsibility and domain of Frontier Corps.

The strength of Chitral State Scouts was increased to 10 companies with an addition of one section of 2.75 inch Vickers machine gun. The strength was first increased from

four companies to six in 1935. More importantly the scouts now came under the control of Frontier Corps for administrative purposes. The political agent of Dir, Swat & Chitral Agency still retained their control but now the posting of officers became a FC affair rather than a military. The first fruit of this was the training of Chitral State Scouts troops on the machine gun which was provided by the instructors from Tochi Scouts & South Waziristan Scouts ; moreover native officers of Chitral State Scouts had to spend three months either at Tochi or at SWS to learn the fine tricks of frontier warfare . Overall the Chitral State Scouts still retained their individual flavor from the other corps of Frontier Corps; they maintained their one qaum recruitment and also the unique system of mobilization and one month training.

Pakistan 1947.

The political history of Gilgit and Chitral is almost interwoven and so is the military history of Chitral State Scouts and Gilgit Scouts. In 1947 when the question of accession of states to Pakistan arose, there was a feeling among the ruling elite of Chitral to be interlink with Afghanistan more than with Pakistan basing upon the geography but the 3rd June 1947 plan had left no option to the states but to choose either between the India or Pakistan. Mehtar Muzafur ul Mulk had good relations with Quaid e Azam and Chitral acceded to Pakistan in August 1947; Gilgit had a different story.

Lord Mountbatten the last viceroy of India had announced the plan on 3rd June 1947^{xxii}, the independent states that included Chitral Hunza, Nagir, Kashmir and Jammu State had the option of joining either dominion or remain independent, however this last option was never seriously considered and all princely states were expected to join India or Pakistan. There were no conditions on the ruler regarding his choice of accession, it was presumed that logic would prevail upon all and rulers will follow the rule of majority. Kashmir and Hyderabad Deccan defied this logic. In June 1947 British abruptly terminated the 60 years lease of Gilgit from Kashmir, Gilgit thus again became Kashmir Darbar territory and Gilgit Scouts reverted back from Frontier Corps to Kashmir military authorities.

Operation Datta Khel – November 1947

On 3rd November 1947 at Gilgit the 600 strong Gilgit Scouts along with their commandant Major Brown a British officer revolted against the Kashmir government^{xxiii} after it had signed a Letter of Accession to Indian Dominion rather than opting for Pakistan. and as the lease had expired after the transfer of power, Gilgit and Laddakh including Skardu were now again part of the Kashmir. This is probably the only incident of any British officer in one hundred and fifty years in India to become a rebel against his own very own superiors, the military forces of both dominions was placed under Field Marshall Auckinleck and all commanders of Pakistan and Indian armed forces were British.

Gilgit scouts were raised as Gilgit Levies in 1889 and they took part in Hunza-Nagar expedition of 1891 under

Colonel Algernon Durand, later in years they were part of Chitral relief force as well in 1895. In 1913 the levies were disbanded and Corps of Gilgit Scouts were raised. Eight companies of Gilgit scouts were deployed along Chinese frontier during WWI, they also reinforced the Chitral Scouts in 1919 War with Afghanistan.

Chitral Scouts had this unique honour that the very operation which changed the geo-strategic position of Kashmir for ever was carried out by an officer who had served in Chitral Scouts before moving to join Gilgit Scouts in July 1947. The operation itself was named after Tochi Scouts post at end of Tochi Valley ‘ Datta Khel^{xxiv}’. Captain William Brown was commissioned in a Frontier Force Regiment in 1941, transferred to SWS , served in Gilgit Scouts , came back to Tochi Scouts and then to Chitral Scouts and finally took the command of Gilgit Scouts after resigning his King’s Commission. He planned the operation on the instigation of Lieutenant Colonel Bacon who remained as Political Agent in NWA and was the Inspecting Officer of Frontier Corps in 1947.

So far there is no empirical evidence to link Major Brown’s act with army headquarters; however there is enough proof to convince that accession of Gilgit with Pakistan was conceived and executed by the Frontier Corps. Most notably by the Lieutenant Colonel Bacon with strong support from Governor of province; his Excellency Cunningham. It is no secret that British had no soft corner for the Indian Congress or its leadership. To the Frontier Corps the stakes were high; they could not simply leave the events to take their natural

course of action which Mr Atlee at 10 Downing Street was wishing.

Gilgit Scouts thus became the nucleus around which the Gilgitis, Baltis, Chilas {all Muslims} attacked Sikh garrisons at Bunji and Skardu capturing Kargil there by cutting the lone Himalayan communication link between Kashmir and Laddakh. This war was independent of the resistance that was being waged all along the Kashmir's border with Pakistan

Pakistan government sent Sardar Muhammad Alam and Major Muhammad Aslam as political agent and military commanders respectively. By the end of November 1947 Major Muhammad Aslam under the name de plume of Colonel Pasha organized the available forces into four wings and decided to continue fight for freedom of Baltistan despite approaching winters. Colonel Pasha identified two axis along which enemy could send reinforcements- one was along Bandipura through Tragbal pass, Minimergh and Gilgit whereas the other was along Zoji La, Kargil, Hamzigund and Skardu. The main task, however, was to free Skardu from the Dogra forces. Basing on this identification colonel Pasha organized his four wings into two forces i.e Tiger Force and Ilex Force.

Tiger Force. It was commanded by Captain (later Lieutenant Colonel) Hassan Khan. Its task was to capture Tragbal pass and check enemy reinforcement towards Gilgit. The force left Bunji on 3 March 1948 and by mid of March it was able to capture Tragbal Pass. In May 1948 enemy launched an attack with two Brigades. The Tiger Force

defended their position relentlessly but ill equipped and ill fed 300 troops could not hold on for long and had to withdraw from the Pass on 16 May 1948. They, however, took up positions about 20 miles behind where they stayed on till cease fire.

Ibex Force. This force was commanded by Major Ehsan Ali of Hunza. Its task was to free Baltistan and advance right up to Kargil, Daras and Zoji La Pass to stop enemy reinforcement along Indus Valley. It left Bunji along Indus River on 29 January 1948. After clearing enemy resistance at Rondu the force encamped at Sondus in the foot of Kharpocho forte. Muslim elements in the Dogra force had silently joined Major Ihsan Ali and it was decided to attack Skardu on night 22-23 February 1948. Everything went as planned but unfortunately the sentry who had to fire green signal fired red one by mistake and hence chance for a surprise attack was lost. Fierce fight ensued but Major Ihsan Ali had to withdraw to reorganize and regroup.

Enemy started reinforcing Skardu and a brigade size force was approaching from Indus Valley side. This force was successfully ambushed at ThorgoPari and huge quantity of weapon, ammunition and ration was captured. Siege of Skardu continued till August 1948 since enemy had been supplying the garrison by air. On 14 August 1948, exactly one year after Pakistan's Independence, Skardu was surrendered by Dogra forces^{xxv}.

Eskimo Force. After unsuccessful attack on Skardu in February 1948, Colonel Pasha organized another force at Chilam Chauki under Lieutenant Colonel Shah Khan. The

force was named Eskimo force. It had to capture Kargil, Dras and Zoji La Passes which was initially the task of Ibex force. This force successfully captured Kargil and completed the siege of Dras when they were joined by Ibex Force. These two forces combined played havoc with enemy and were able to capture Kargil, Dras, Zoji la Pass and had invested Leh as well. At this point in time, General Headquarters replaced Colonel Pasha with Colonel Jilani who decided to strengthen his positions at Kargil, Dras and Zojila and abandoned the idea to attack Leh. The major considerations for this were lack of recourses and over dispersion of forces.

Chitral State Scouts & Chitral State Bodyguards-1947

Mehtar of Chitral Muzzafar ul Mulk declared jihad for the liberation of Kashmir, he had already signed an instrument of accession to Pakistan. The force structure at Chitral comprised of Chitral State Scouts and Mehtar's bodyguard. Chitral State Bodyguards were the personal and loyal troops of Mehtar, they were important and vital in a state where majority of rulers have been replaced with assassination. They were raised in 1909 and issued with rifles but ammunition was provided next year. The situation at Gilgit was not very clear because after first week of November 1947 the Gilgit Scouts had declared an independence which was very complex in nature and it died down after a fortnight. At this stage the Dogras and Indian Army was moving into the Kashmir. Thus the confrontation between the Pakistan and Indian troops remained confined to

the east of Indus where as the area west of Indus were left to the Dogra and the Scouts to fight it out with winner taking it all. Situation in Guraiz (Astore Sector) and Skardu valleys was tense and precarious in nature, Gilgit Scouts under command Colonel Hassan Gilgiti was retreating. The enemy had made considerable advance across Burzil Pass. It is in this back ground that Chitral State Scouts and Chitral State Bodyguards entered into the arena. Chitral Scouts relieved Gilgitis in Kamri and Domel Sectors where as Bodyguards headed towards Skardu..

His Highness Colonel Muttah ul Mulk, Victor of Skardu.

Ruler of the state and honorary colonel of Chitral State Scouts Mehtar Muzzafar ul Mulk sent his bodyguards to fight along with the Chitral Scouts.. He sent two companies of bodyguards under command his younger brother Muttah ul Mulk; who was given the rank of colonel, other two brothers namely Prince Burhan and ...prince were also sent there. The first wave of mujahedeen from Chitral had gone in early days of October 1947 towards the Kashmir , this was comprised of lashkar from Drosh led by Haider ul Mulk, Amin ul Mulk & Saif Ullah Jan , out of which Saif embraced shahadat at Noushehra; these mujahedeen later came back to Drosh.

Chitral State Scouts two companies were also under the overall command of Prince Muttah ul Mulk. Captain Agha Asghar Ali{ he was wounded and reverted back to Chitral after a month}, honorary lieutenant Abdul Rauf

Khan, Subedar Jan Badshah. The Scouts companies were deployed and employed on the Guraiz- Kargil sector.

Gilgit after the freedom act of Gilgit Scouts was still under the threat of the Dogra forces stationed at Skardu and Leh. There was a company strength at Skardu under Captain Parbat Singh as a reinforcement to the Dogra Battalion, another Dogra officer Captain Kishen Singh was holding the Tsari Pass the mouth leading to the Skardu along the Indus going upstream. Brigadier Faqir Singh was the overall commander with headquarters at Kargil. The bodyguards led by prince { [himself a WW2 veteran of Burma, became a POW in the hands of Japanese also}, he led the bodyguards towards the Gilgit.

Prince Muttah ul Mulk was a classical princely officer {he married a Chinese women while in Japanese prison during WW2}, brave and leader of men; he will always be remembered as the Victor of Skardu.

He reached Skardu via Deosai plains{15000 feet}, adopting and circumnavigating the Indian held Tsari Pass and thus descended down upon the Skardu City from north east where as the Dogras had their troops stretched on south east; the only track coming into the Skardu Bowl along the Indus upstream., he had achieved the surprise with his two companies of bodyguards and laid the siege, the Skardu garrison was held strongly by the Dogra army at the almost impregnable fort on Indus. There was nothing which could be done by bodyguards except to bleed the Dogra which they did by remaining steadfast and withstanding the few enemy air attacks on them. Every night these Chitralis would climb the

rugged and difficult mountain terrain and try to reach near the fort. Mutath ul Mulk had sent a letter on 17th June 1948 to the besieged Dogra force at Skardu ‘ I advice you to surrender .. I take the responsibility of your safety’.^{xxvi} On 19th June the besieged commander Lieutenant Colonel Thapha sent his emissary Sepoy Amarnath with a white flag to Muttah ul Mulk accepting surrender terms under Geneva Convention.

^{xxvii}. However 180 of his men refused to do so and tried to escape out of which 80 were captured and remaining died in the escape. Captain Ganga Singh was handed over to the natives of Skardu who executed him for his crimes of rape and turning the mosque into a brothel house. Chitral Bodyguards who stood out in the campaign includes Lieutenant Sardar Aman Shah, Kahdim Dastigir, Ali Dyar, Atai Karim, Ayub Khan, Abu Ilas Khan, Abdul Jihan Khan, Sher Arab Khan, Wilayat Khan, Mehrab Hussain , Muhababt Khan and Muhamamd Gul. There were ten shaheed from bodyguard including Sirajud Din, Jeidi Kahn, Akbar Kahn, Sobi Khan, Dawa Paanh, Nawab Kahn, Barzangi Khan and Mirza Nadir^{xxviii}.

Bodyguards were a pack of Chitrali commoners who were having insufficient clothing and food, ‘ *one old shirt, torn shalwar, an vintage chooga{coat}....a shredded scarf which tried to cover their neck, feet from the customary socks, a torn chappali or old shoe which was kept working with innumerable laces or clothes wrapped around it*’.^{xxix}

Colonel Mutath ul Mulk did not had a peaceful end, he was arrested on 12th September 1948 at Peshawar, tried and put behind the bars at Peshawar he was later released in October 1949 and reinstated as Governor of Mastuj. Reason for his arrest was political in nature as he became too popular among the people of Chitral; rather than anything to do with war crimes.

Asmat Wali's Diary. Nursing assistant of Chitral State Scouts Baba Asmat Wali died in 1988, he took part in Kashmir Jihad of 1948 , more importantly he left a diary of the account. Distance from Chitral to Kamri was covered in 38 days, Asmat on 20th December 1948 notes in his diary ‘ saw Pakistan currency at a shop , Government of Pakistan was written on the currency note’. He also notes down the change of command at Gilgit Scouts where Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah Jan was transferred and Major Tufail took over the command of Gilgit scouts. Asmat also mentions the Indian counterpart Colonel Suba Lal Chand who according to him was a shrewd man. But the most touching part of his diary is the account of an old women in Minimerg , ‘a rich widow who sacrificed over twenty five goats in four months for the scouts because they were extremely short on ration’. Asmat when arrived back as victor to his native town in November 1949 came to know that he had lost his sister in his absence she had died almost immediately when he had left for Jihad but mother intentionally did not let pass the information to him.

Naib Subedar Islam Shah, he had joined the Chitral Scouts in 1932 and he fought extremely well in the Kashmir

War for which he was promoted to present rank something which was purely reserved for the Kator family , on his promotion many other subedars of Kator family resigned. Khuda Baksh Utrai was another scout who was promoted to the rank of Jemadar due to his performance in the action, he was the very first havildar major of the Chitral State Scouts

Tuesday 10th September 2013, Chitral.

It is 1930 hours and I am sitting in the library which is one of the best among all the Frontier Corps libraries, I cannot go on without mentioning the Lance Naik Nazir of education corps, a good man and very hospitable he belongs to Sanobar in upper Chitral , Mastuj area, I am going to his village tomorrow to interview an old war veteran of 1948 Kashmir War, initially the programme was today but there are two jeeps which leaves for his village and both had gone to Dir with apples. Thus I will take the jeep for Buni which is the junction of Yarkhun and another river.

In the morning I had the Chitrali shawl which are made here in the scouts own handloom , they are different for male and females , difference mainly in colour, male is brown or khaki and much larger in size, ladies is bit short in length and colours are generally more dark, like red or black. I was excited about them and later the works havildar brought the tailor also who took my measurement and let's see what he makes in the end.

Full Moon at Chitral

Morning are very pleasant here, chirping of birds, the music of water flowing over the stones, the breeze passing through maple trees and in between all of a sudden the calling voice of peacock, the panic stricken voices of Chinese hen, I have always seen them in pair and always worried like oriental wives. I was given a lead by the havildar regarding the chappal makers by the name of Dardon Khan who had a shop at Drosh as well and here he is located in Ataleeq bazaar.

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I walked to the bazaar , Tirich Mir was visible toady but partially, weather hot but I enjoyed the walk , I had the white Chitrali cap on me and it helps in breaking the ice with natives and I found myself walking as I am walking in any where else in world. I passed by the old bags shop , my own bag given for manufacture are not yet ready in Peshawar thus I am looking for a hand bag, I found one antique looking bag and I told him to keep it for me. The chappal maker shop was an hoax as there were ordinary looking chapapls, the owner not present and someone sitting who was absolutely blank about this what I gathered from him was that there are no chappal makers in Chitral. Next target was to find a map of Chitral from Faiz Book store. I took the hidden path behind the main bazaar , passing through village and emerging from the city end, they are in process of erecting and constructing a new bridge over the stream. There seems to be a crowd present all the time on bridge watching this feat. I had to ask many shops regarding the amp before I was able to hit the Faiz Book store but he did not had the map. On my way back I stopped at a dry fruit shop and bought the pea nuts. Wall nuts are very popular here but they will be solid in another two weeks. The major areas are upper Chitral and Kaalsh

valleys which have ripe wall nuts which are bigger in size; the size of Chitral wall nuts is rather small. I did went inside the centennial school which was opened up in 1926 by the HH Nasirul Mulk, principal was very kind and took me around the building, the main hall is gracious and spacious , I especially liked the Persian and Iqbal's couplets written on wall. School have a tennis court as well, a tree at the court have a rather unusual plaque which was put inside the trunk of maple tree and today it has been covered by the trunk an unusual sight.

I got my chappal polished from a street vendor and paid him rupees twenty, then bought two books one is the proceedings of third Hindu Kush conference held this year and other an urdu on the life of Nasirul Mulk {1936-1943 ruler}, at times one finds a wealth of information in these local books. Then long up walk back to mess, it is quite a walk and good one. Traffic is not much here yet one gets the smoke of vehicle passing close by and changing gear, air is generally clean and fresh with no odour, streets are clean and very few stray dogs. One sees and notice women walking alone or with a child wearing veil but their eyes are always staring at you, I wear glasses to have a better look at them. Have yet to talk to any lady here other than the Carey Schofield but natives have own class and charisma, I am more keen in having conversation with a Persian family.

In the mess lawn I had a talk with Nazir and mess JCO about the local food delicacies surprisingly there are no sweet dishes as part of Chitral food culture even the tea consumed in upper Chitral has a salt in it and the popular dish of Kheer has salt too. There are many types of bread here,

one having only walnut inside is known as Polai and one having potatoes and wall nut inside the bread is called 'Aalomojhi'. Ghulmandi is a another bread in which goat cheese is put inside a bread and then pure ghee or butter is poured after heating over it. Walnut oil is used as a sprinkle over rice to give it an aroma, Chamrogh is the apricot juice in it dry apricot is soaked in water for a day and then filtered with fine cotton cloth and you get only the juice and no pulp of apricot, I have tried it at Skardu only draw back is that apricot initially upset your stomach quite heavily , but in other words it cleans your stomach thoroughly. Shuula is another dish which is a mixture of rice and duck meat. Chitral is famous for its bird shooting and that is why I was curious as how they prepare the shoot meat, but I think they do not bar b que it the way Afridi or Shinwari do. Chitrالي kaalaey is another dish in which small pieces of bread alongwithKaveer which is a speciality of Mulkhow area it is like gaarm masala or kalazera of Rattu, it is used in cooking and also as a drink to fight fever, it is grown on ground and have flowers which after drying are stored at present it cost Rupees 400 per kilogram , walnuts are rupees 300 per kilogram.

Chitral, 12th September 2013

I have just arrived back from Songohor the village of Lance Naik Nazir, after spending the night there; presently I am in the mess having a cup of tea and enjoying the weather, which has drizzled.

Full Moon at Chitral

I went yesterday morning at 0900 hours, Nazir went with me to the Adda which is at the end of Shah Bazaar opposite PTDC Motel, the Hiace goes only when it is full, the scouts with me ensured that I should get the front seat but it was occupied thus I got into rear. The principal of centennial school was also on board, finally coach left at 1000 hours, weather was hot.

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I had travelled on this road way back in 1995 and it seems as if nothing much has changed as far as the scenery is concerned but now it is metallic road till Booni. A hydel power is also under construction at Gowazi almost 25 kilometres away from Chitral. My interest now was to follow the siege of Chitral relief force, which came from Gilgit, and to see the area from that perspective. The scenery initially is rugged very narrow and then it opens up however the mountains on the roadside are muddy and kacha with plenty of landslides at frequent distances. Within the coach a lady in burqa and an old man were sitting behind me and when I stole the glance through driver's mirror I realised that she is quite pretty and quite absorbed in the area, she at the end again put on the burqa. The journey to Booni took almost two hours, we changed direction along the River Yarkhun at times on east bank and at others on west, bridges mainly wooden planks one odd was pucca, I have to think where probably only at Chitral.

Valley has one similar pattern, it opens up and then closes again opens up and then closes, plenty of greenery and trees, on the far bank that is opposite to the road the mountains are barren rugged and it seems there was a road or

track in old days because one can make out the track and few abandoned habitats in the form of stone shelters. Agha Khan University and school at Reshan, the government college building short of Booni, the hydel power staff colony, which is well guarded and well lay out, are few of the interesting places enroute. Speed of coach was quite high and scary in nature.

Booni is different from Chitral, I got down at the bazaar instead of Adda where Nazir's brother Amanullah was waiting, mobile phone service works here at Booni, I had a easy load and then got in touch with the Amanullah, we had to wait for an hour for connecting coach towards the Songohor. I spent the time waiting at the electric shop; I was surprised to see so many electric gadgets shop selling freezers, microwave oven, electric kettle and washing machine. I enquired about the sate of electricity not much better than the rest of country rather a bit better but the shopkeeper said that people like to buy and more over if one has bought anything the other will buy it even on a loan. This I have heard before as well.

After an hour the Toyota land cruiser two door was ready for travel, I got the front seat, the seat was broken, driver a very young boy and vehicle had diesel filter clogging issue which creates a power surge at climb, a dangerous proposition but I think none of the passengers were aware of it, I kept my eyes on the road, driver and mentally ready to jump at any instant. The number of students were quite high on the road with very high proportion of girls, most of them were wearing all green uniform dress with white duppatta, I later came to know that theses are private school students,

same holds for boys wearing shirt, tie and trousers, college boys were wearing white kameez shalwar, over all an open society which is enlightened, girls were talking with males and enroute driver also picked another female student. For me coming from the Khyber Agency it was quite a pleasant change. I forgot to mention about the headgears, in the coach from Chitral-Booni I saw one pathan man wearing traditional puggri, here many were wearing Chitrali cap but equal numbers were without it and very very few were wearing the white colour including myself.

The track is the same that leads to Mastuj and in pathetic condition, muddy, landslides, narrow and at times it opens up, We stopped at mid point to put water into the radiator there were two three other jeeps also. Soon after an hour of drive we hit the track from where we diverted to the right and below to cross the river, a very narrow track very steep and then over the wooden bridge across the river, a vast ground then steep climb and we were soon into the village, I paid the fare for both of us {rupees 300 in total} from Chitral to Booni it was 150/. Now the walk in the village started, narrow stony path with medium level walls on sides, fresh water flowing, thick vegetation, trees laden with apples of all kind green and red. We walked and walked and it was all uphill when we soon hit the open patch where under a walnut tree I saw an old man sipping tea which was being brought to him by a lady probably his wife but logically should have been his daughters; Amanullah told me he is the war veteran for whom I have come this far. We kept on walking and soon reach the end of village and there between a narrow path was Nazir's house, on one side his living and on other his baitahk.

My main worry till now was to find the washroom, I thought whether they have western system or is it in the open. This is a major worry in strange places and very dangerous one because it takes minutes in mountains before you get stomach upset.

As we entered into the annexe or baitahk what a scene, green small lawn, a three room barrack and fruit laden trees, there stood two children, one boy of ten and a girl of four, both dressed very nicely and clean, expecting the guest. It reminded my own children and me of Skardu who were exactly the same, the house and scenery is same with High Mountain behind the house and green lawn. Children very well mannered, very friendly and very neat in nature and dress. I also admit that in these almost thirty years of military life this is the first time ever that I have visited a soldier's house, Nazir's father is a retired subedar major of 38 Frontier Force regiment, his brother has just passed masters in commerce and his internship will start from Monday at Booni in bank. Overall the village reminded me of Spanish village at potes, the Scottish highlands. Half the lawn was basking under sun rays and we sat in the shade of apple tree, I pluck one apple and eat it, what a feeling it is, other factor was the washroom which Amanullah showed me and that took all my worries away, I just sat and played with children while Amanullah went for the lunch, I was hungry because I had not eaten anything since morning and it was now 1600 hours.

The valley which I have travelled so far and the place where I stood now is different in one aspect, it is away from main track and on the far bank thus historically and

geographically more isolated than the one on the main caravan route. The Booni Valley Pass starts from here, the mouth is very narrow and it is only recently {30 odd years} that the track has been widened at the base otherwise the centuries old foot track is visible on the mountain. Songohor village is at the mouth of the glacier, which is quite long and steep and ends up at Twin Mountains, which are snow covered; their peaks no less menacing than the K-2 only altitude is the difference.

Soon the son of Nazir brought a pitcher, towel and a bowl, I being a socialist declined this but than under the cultural heritage I washed my hands. It is a beautiful thing of culture, which teaches the future the importance of cultural values a typical central Asian culture. Then both went inside and brought two slavers of dishes. I before coming here have been talking with the mess junior commissioned officer in charge about the local delicacies and he promised me to prepare on my arrival back, Nazir have been listening all this. There was Polai the bread made with yeast and swollen. Ghalmandi, the fried pieces of bread slim one, having the fresh cheese in between, Darshki, which is a mixture of eggs and flour; it was good. Shank, which is a curd, made from the boiling of lassi, it is in small pieces and looks good. Sanawajee which is the only thing having any spice thus it is more favoured by me, it is nothing special but mixing of flour with the local masalas and only now one understands the importance of spice trade route.

Despite all my hunger I could not eat anything but simple bread and sanawaji, not that the other foodstuffs were

not fresh but may be they were too fresh. The dairy products of each area, valley differs from other thus the taste of milk is also different; I somehow cannot take any dairy product other than that of my own village. After a cup of tea, which was sugarless because in these parts especially in Chitral they do not take sugar; but sugar was present in a plate. We set off for the veteran Nadir who was still sitting under the tree but there were two additional chairs also put there, I occupied one and Amin who also acted as the interpreter did other.

The children all sat around, there was only the spring water flowing melody, the walnut tree had a big hole in it and I enquired about its age and got the nodded affirmative. There was sun and there was shade also, in the close by distance was few fields having the sunrays falling in the middle and brightening up the already cheerful environs. Few women {two} were standing at rather far distance out of ear shot but looking after the grazing cows which numbered equal in strength in addition to the young calf.

Bit of silence as I absorbed the beauty and in any case you do not just go and ask the veteran a question, in most of cases it takes bit of time to understand each other especially for me to start the question, in this case when I asked him, when were you enrolled? And got a puzzled look, it became obvious that he does not understand Urdu thus Amin asked the same and that is how I got it. I could understand few words and thus makes out the whole purpose, old man like so many others do not use hand signs frequently. Nadir was enrolled in 1945 in Chitral sate Scouts at Drosh and in 1961 got his retirement papers from Drosh too. During 1947-48

Kashmir War he was part of artillery battery, it took nine mules to carry one howitzer. They moved through the Shandur pass towards the Gilgit amidst the snow and extreme freezing temperature; they had very little warm clothing with them as it was promised to be supplied at Gilgit. Nadir and the Chitral scouts remain committed for another seven months. Nadir highlighted that the Chitral states and Chitral Body guard fought the war separately. Nadir was deployed at Gurais with his guns for another seven months before they were pushed back. Nadir used to get Rupees 2 only, mainly for purchase of milk, although the pay then was rupees 22/ but Nadir like all other men got it after coming home, in case of nadir it was rupees 400/ quite a sum in those days. There was little ration and insufficient warm clothing at the front. Captain Rauf was in charge of the gunners, Major Mohiuddin who was the brother of Mastuj governor was in charge of the scouts contingent, thus in a way the princely family of Mehtar were all engaged actively in the liberation of Kashmir. For ration Nadir went out on hunting and hunted markhoor, they ate the meat, preserved it, presented the head to the officer in charge and made shoes and coat out of the rest; this is how nadir started living as the son of soil. For trouser the army issued blanket was made. Nadir hated the trouser but it was made compulsory to be worn by the officer in charge ‘ thus I would put it on for his pleasure and parade and would quickly changed into shalwar’. During the operations the Indian Air force attacked many times and it was in one such attack that two scouts embraced shahadat, ‘ we would rush towards the cover as soon as we heard the aircraft noise’.

Nadir stayed t the front and then pulled back, on our way back the mule got buried under snow and it was only after the winter that it was retrieved as it was having official issued items on body, which were the cause of many enquiries.

I had nothing more to ask from him so we bid farewell and had a walk of the village, myself, Amin and his cousin who was in early thirties along with one teenage boy. We walked calmly and slowly through the paths made of stones and reached the outskirts by following the fresh water upstream, soon we reached the fresh water fountain head, it was enclosed by a stone hedge and inside fresh water was oozing out.

Amin narrated me the story about how all this place is the property of one man, Ziaart by the name who pretended to be made when the water channel was being made, he would throw the stones into the dug out channel and finally the people left it up as a bad joke and from that day Ziaart is acting normal and now own the channel, amin showed me the house of Ziarat later perched on the edge of the channel a good house.

Amin also narrated how the flood on 27th June 2007 played havoc here in the village, I did not paid any attention to it taking it as a flow of glacier in summer but I was bit alarmed as the village being old should not have gone through this tragedy.

I asked Amin more about that flood as we walked through the stoned paths in the village, meantime scanning the

two women rather one woman and other grown up girl looking after their grazing cows and lambs. I further inquired about the livestock in the village and acme to know that few keep goats, as they require more attention rather lamb is the preferred pet, cows are there which are smaller in height. Amin told me that initially the flow of water in the village stream started increasing then overflowing and soon the colour also changed into mud but none paid any attention, then all of sudden at night the water rushed and the thundering noise of stones being crushed and hurled was frightening which did not allowed people even time to save their certificates of education, by this time we had reached the house.

Little girl was playful in mood and rolled on lawn, crawled under table and generally amused everyone. Amin's father Amanullah also joined in and we talked about the apples and pears. He also highlighted the flood, the earth close to glacier just opened up and started creeping upward this lasted for over three days, only one portion of village was affected badly the other mildly and remaining untouched. The water and adjoining stones took away many old walnut trees, according to him in his life and neither from his old people he had seen or heard anything like that happening in village, best part is that they did not attributed it to any sin like Gomorrah.

It was now almost dark and soon the pale light bulb brighten up clearly indicating the low voltage but soon it was normal and we moved inside the room, There are two Amin big rooms, one washroom with eastern commode and other was closed probably a store, these two room are at two ends

of veranda. Inside it was typical native culture with carpet on ground, cushions at the wall and one bed with bedding on it. The hand carved table mat and cornice cover indicates the artistic mind of probably Nazir's wife. I sat t one corner feeling tired and wanting to sleep, my muscles were aching but I had to sit, we had a glass of Chamrock which is a local juice of apricot, it is thick and has its own sweetness ideal for summer, the only drawback with it is that when taken for first time it can upset your stomach, I had taken two glasses and was now waiting for the result. Another feature of mountain or native food, water and bread is that it creates air in your stomach, you need to pass it out otherwise it can create lot of stomach pain. Now all these are culturally taboo issues but they are reality in deed. I soon change into a kameez shalwar which I had brought with me and also handed over the last of shawl to Aman, it was a brown colour male size and I had kept it for myself but now I feel that I have to present something to this old subedar, he was reluctant but happy and I was more than happy to present it to him, my only regret being that I had nothing for the children.

Soon another friend joins in he looked like a genuine tableeghi and was quite interested in my talk. I came to know that Ismailis are in majority in this village and all sects were living happily till 1970 when on fateful day Maulvi Obaidullah made such an inflammatory speech that since then both sects are hardly on talking terms with each other, needles to say that moulvi himself was assassinated after two years. My mind arced towards the assassins of Hassan bin Sabah no doubt looks like their work or trademark. Another round of food despite all my resistance, rice but without the showering

of walnut oil, chicken, turnips, bread, and again the cheese filled chapattis, it was too much but I had to eat it. Then came fruit and finally the beautifully decorated custard, which I was unable to eat. I resisted tea or green tea, promised them that I will take the fruit with me in the morning along with the dry fruit, the walnut oil which I was looking for last two months was finally there. Every valley has its own cooking pattern but not long ago everything here in Chitral was cooked in the walnut oil, which is distilled in the house. But now the Dalda or other oils have taken over still walnut oil has its own charm the way olives are to Mediterranean the same way Walnut oil is to Chitral and apricot Oil to Skardu, surprisingly there is no Apricot oil here. The walnuts of this village are quite famous because of their size, they still need another a month before they are fully ripe and then the outer green shell bursts open and then you have to shake the tree to get them on ground, at times even strong wind can do this job for you. A good tree fetches around 80 kilogram of walnuts which the buyers from Chitral takes away by paying almost one third of the price on which they sell at the end. It holds true for apples.

I had a peaceful night and was up at the fajr prayers remembering that the first vehicle from village leaves at 0600 hours. I sat out side in the lawn and watched the sky, it was still full of stars and soon the first sign of darkness going away appeared. Oh I forgot to mention the moon which rises from the mountains behind the house {just like Skardu house} and when I saw it last night it was probably of tenth day and beautiful to stare at. Now at dawn the birds chirping started coming into ears, the village has over four mosques and equal number of Jamat Khannas. I pluck one pear and enjoyed its

freshness. Amin and Aman both came and I sat with the father talking about the village he told me that there are over seven different types of clans living in the village. Meanwhile the breakfast tray came in by this time I was really getting wary of food and complained joyfully that I am leaving this place mainly due to this excessive food which I have to devour where as I would prefer a fresh fruit here. I had to drink tea and eat few pieces of paratha.

I asked the old man about the castes in the village as who stitches shoes that does haircutting. The strange thing is that no particular caste exists in the village for such professions as they do in Punjab. This creates another problem how to classify the people according to their trades. Thus here in this village which is an old village probably in existence for centuries there are seven types of people who live, two categories namely Hishaey and Achanjay along with Ghonomein are the oldest who were always engaged in hardship, hard labour and beegar, then Raza Khel, Syed, Zoondhe, Paksheer or Yashaey are the other castes. The highest caste is the Nawab or ruling class that there is none here in village although the old caste the rais who were ruling it before Kator are probably exists close to village. Ismailis and Sunnis both belong to these classes.

Now the question comes in how this village evolved, it were the Ismailis who advanced from the Broghul towards the down south and at one time they overthrew the Kafir clans the original inhabitants of this valley the original Aryans. They then accepted Islam or the line between these two was at the Booni Valley. With the passage of time the incursion of

Muslims or Turks from the Arandu valley put the Sunni sect in firm footing and it was then finally under Shuja ul Mulk in 1926 that a wave to convert the Ismailis forcibly into Sunni started which lasted for a bit but still its remnants can be seen. Today very few Ismailis openly confessed their sect; this is what I learnt from the Carey Schoffield the principal of Major Langland's School at Sinhur Chitral, she is of the opinion that majority of the Ismaili teachers simply do not want to answer the question about the sect. Ismailis according to Aman Ullah do not offer the Friday prayers, on another question about the fair and festivals in the village, the standard Muslim festivals of Eid are celebrated and Ismaili also celebrate Nouroze which falls on 21st March every year. Now we started walking towards the intended jeep, the regular jeep had gone early and now a relative of theirs will drop me across the river at Perwak from where I will catch the jeep for Booni. I enquired about the graveyard in the village and was surprised to know that there is no community graveyard here, it used to be but feuds have now forced the people to bury their dead in their own lands. It is all due to scarcity of land.

We bid good-bye and Amin the brother came with me in the Suzuki jeep, which had been converted, into diesel till Perwak. In the way it was still not seven o'clocks, I noticed small boys carrying school bags and coming from the other part of river wearing shirt and tie. There were girls also quite grown up wearing all black uniform carrying books in hand. There is middle and high school for girls in the Songohor village, which is a government, owned that is why the uniform is black. Perwak has only middle school. We got down at the Perwak and waited for the jeep to take me to the

Booni. Quite a number of students were walking or waiting for the transport. One has to admire the spirit of parents and children in seeking knowledge; these young boys and girls walk almost three –four miles one-way uphill and downhill one way everyday to gain knowledge. The girl's student while passing said salaam to all standing. Soon I got an old jeep CJ-5 to take me to Booni. It is an art to get into this jeep, you have to climb and then squeezed through the rods to sit, I had a rear seat, journey was uneventful, I dozed off many times, but the ever present risk of jeep going down is a reality which kept me on tenter hooks. We were seven people in the jeep, two students, three going for some judicial work, two of family probably going on medical mission.

At Booni, I had a shave and meanwhile I had put my bag into the waiting Hiace and when I came out I saw the Hiace moving out and soon it was gone, I was furious and had all kind of names for these Boonis but then I saw that my bag is now placed in the next waiting coach, it lessened up my anger. The coach left after an hour, I had a rear seat and every now and then the driver will stop to carry an errand for someone at Chitral, it is how things work here, letter to post, something to purchase and some small item to give to someone. Seat was uncomfortable, day hot but later it drizzled, coach traversing at high speed, the constant yaw and kind of roll all put together makes this an uncomfortable ride. I again tried to grasp as much of the geography as possible. Valleys are narrow then open up then again closes down thus each encompassing a separate identity and this is how it was three centuries ago. I arrived back at Chitral at 1200 hours, got the taxi, which charged me two hundred, rupees and I was

back in the warmth, hospitality and comfort of mess, nothing can beat it. Had a cup of coffee, thanked Nazir for all his hospitality, received a call from Khyber rifles and then went off to sleep.

Saturday & Sunday 14/15 September 2013, Petako Gaz , 1825 hours.

The General Officer Commanding the 17 Division Major General Sana Ullah Khan Niazi has embraced shahadat at Dir today ; he was hit by an IED while he was going back after spending the night at Drosh. It was only on Friday evening that commandant and myself were sitting in the mess lawn when i came to know that he is coming by helicopter to visit at Langurbat post. The officers were busy in making out the approaches and take off pattern of helicopters while I just remained on listening post but what I gathered was that programme of general is subject to weather and if it is bad then he may land at Drosh instead of Langurbat. I have never met him , I was scanning the pictures of the Chitral Scouts with the photographer Nazir on Saturday at the office and it was only then I saw his pictures , I had been mistaking him for Colonel Rizwan Rafi but that was Major General Sanaullah, giant of a man; and today at noon I heard from the colonel in charge of the military intelligence about the incident, colonel was going to the mess to hear it on private channels. This is the sad end of the general .

Weekend has been productive, I scanned the pictures on Saturday with Nazir , I still have a feeling that he has

hidden certain pictures folders but I think I have enough for the book especially the polo pictures are good. Later I had a tea with the Naik Rab Nawaz from Mulkhow at Phupokhan Gurzain, he corrected me that Ratnei does not mean a cafe rather it is small lawn. He also highlighted that his language Khowar is the more correct version and it is heavy for others , I agree with him. The term Chitrali is as confusing as the term British, in that case it encompasses English, Scott, Irish and Welsh. Same holds true for the Chitral, it is not an ethnic group rather a conglomeration of six mountainous states which are presently the tehsils of District Chitral. In one of the pictures which was taken in Mastuj in early fifties the governor of Mastuj is wearing a paggri which is more of Dogra style than the pathan pattern. Now this is very pertinent lead as the governor always wear correct official pattern of the native state dress but it clearly indicates the absence of Chitrali cap and there by indicating an alien ship of governor. Similar pattern was narrated by the naik also over cup of tea. His father is a retired subedar from FF , a brother was shaheed in Kargil he was serving in Azad Kashmir Regiment there. He himself was initially enrolled in police but later his father pressurised him to join either army or Chitral scouts and now he is a driver here. At Phophokan which means children in Chitrali I saw an old man who looks mentally unstable. I was told by the driver that he was enrolled as a gardener by Colonel Murad in 1986 and since then he is living here doing small errands, he is always ready to fight if any one makes even a gesture towards the Chitral Scouts vehicles or men. The standard of park and the canteen is outstanding; it is certainly among the top ten parks of army in Pakistan. The atmosphere so peaceful with the river Chitral making noise

flowing just feet away , you can enjoy the waves and currents of water following under the bridges while sitting on a bench and sipping coffee.

The bakery makes excellent and fresh cake russ, pizza and rolls apart from samosa and kebabs. The other adjoining park is the Chinar or maple gardens it is on the east side of road which separates both parks, old gigantic trees with vast umbrella of branches practically covering the whole lot of park but then this is the beauty of it, ample sitting places have been created by having wooden benches, I saw a shop in which a person was making something on enquiry it was revealed that he is making the samosas for the park, he offered me to have a samosa but I pended it which I am now regretting. There are two bridges, and these parks are adjacent to the new bridges but as one walks few yards the old bridge and road is hit , this bridge is now barbed due to its structure I believe but more due to security, next to it is the Murad's mosque built on the River , one of the most beautiful mosque in Pakistan almost a replica of old Jhelum mosque but it stands out in terms of its design, architecture, location, colour and beautiful rose garden.

On the way back we stopped at the Chitral polo ground which is at the east end of Ataleeq Bazar opposite radio Pakistan and PIA office, a beautiful scene , long elongated uneven green ground which is ascending towards the south , over a dosen polo players were playing and equal number of horses were being made ready astride the ground. Over a thousand men were watching the game, on the far end the two musicians were playing harmonic melodies which

indicates the goal and the signature tune of the player taking the shoot is played, sun as not very bright, rather cloudy in nature. We sat at the northern end or the bazaar end, two old pavilions are still in use along with a newer one, the players and others were just sitting there.

An interesting day, it was Friday and I wanted to utilise the day important thing to do was to get the pictures of the mounted infantry and the boards of the different appointments. So I was up by the first light, ok bit exaggerating make it second light but I went with Major Kazmi and Captain Fizan along with Major Arbab. Typical mountain morning, little bit of rush in the bazaar and then we were in the fort but this twenty odd minutes drive was enrich, the discussion or rather I joined the conversation when Major Kazmi brought the subject of village defence committees and I enquired about them. Today was the interview day with three or four officers waiting to be interviewed by the commandant.

Typical apprehensions and anticipations of the officers, one goes back year backs when I also went through the same anxiety, to get the house, to get the hut, and apprehensions. Thus it all is very enjoyable and on the other hand one thinks of how time passes so slowly in military life but in a sense it is the beauty of the system; but it can be a drawback as well. I got the sketch made by the Lance Naik Zahid of the education cadre, an excellent effort beautiful and according to my desire. I took the pictures of it and many other maps of the area and Chitral scouts and the Afghanistan.

Then i was lucky to get the commandants briefing from Major Kazmi with whom i am having more informal relationship; I am admiring his qualities. I came to know about the incident at Ursun a couple of years when over 22 Scouts along with the three policemen and levies were killed by the attack through Arandu by the afghans, centuries old pattern; thus i was interested in knowing this important episode in the history of Chitral Scouts the worst night of their history. Meanwhile one C-130 was scheduled to come to Chitral as the pilot of the aircraft had informed the adjutant on mobile . Heard Sindhi in the adjutant office as one officer an ex 5 Light Ack Ack along with his wife herself an army doctor a captain both belonging to the Hyderabad were sitting for interview and talking in Sindhi , what a sound what a feeling to hear it at Chitral. Commandant then had to leave but the Photographer Nazir had taken his pictures and had completed all that required from him. I now waited for the file on occurrences which had the detail of the Ursun incident. The headmaster of the school came and gave me the essays written by the students but the best news was from the tailor who promised to give me the shirt by noon , the work non commissioned officer also showed me the hand woven cloth that was being weave for me. Took some pictures. One interesting fact that has emerged from the adjutant briefing is the Denzing Hall which i had initially heard from Major Siraj Ul Mulk, it is behind the Phokopan Gurzain. I got the albums from commandant offices and also the file but after giving a piece of mind to the clerks . It seems quite in order with some of these clerks. While coming back i wanted to get to the photographer because my sixth senses are warning me about these tradesmen. In the room a pleasant surprise in the form of the shirt , what a

feeling what a cloth, so light yet so warm , soft in nature very light. I again went back with the Major Kazmi after having smoked a joint to get the photographer. In the way i found the talk most intoxicating.

Kazmi narrated that they had given the weapons to the Kalash people after two of their men were killed but they refused to take it stating that they do not require it and they trust the state for their protection. Secondly in another village the villagers gave it after

Injigan

Injigan is the western most valley of district Chitral, its literal meaning in local dialect is ‘prosperous’. On its east is tehsils Mulkhow, on west Afghanistan, north Hindukush and in south is Chitral Town and tehsils. TirchMir the highest peak of the Hindukush si situated here, near Karim abad, Rokhon is the second biggest peak situated near Village Sainak, people calls TirchMir as the abode of fairies.

Injigan is divided into three valleys namely Karimaabd, Urkari & Garmchasma. Weather is extreme in winter which blocks almost all ground routes due to heavy snow, spring starts from April onwards. Lotkow is the other name for Injigan, River Lotkow is the largest river of the valley which originates from Kotal Doawra and joins River Chitral near Chitral airport. River Bagosht, Othrai, Gol, Urkari and Karimaabd stream all joins in River Lotkow before it terminates. The river is famous for its clear water and trout

Fish. There is mainly one crop in Injigan except in Bahtooli, Shigoor, Momi, Mough and Mardan Koh. The best grapes are produced in area Mough which are distilled to make local wine. Injigan has many other peculiarities but it is the presence of natural sulphuric warm water which is available year around; it is this which makes the Injigan as the most neat and clean valley in whole of northern areas especially when in other areas people seldom takes bath in winter. Mough is famous for the Chitrali patti the hand woven cloth. Urkari valley is the most under developed area of the Injigan, there was not even a jeep able track till 1983. Potatoes of Injigan are also very famous and in great demand. The very first person to be enrolled in Chitral Scouts in 1903 was from Yoft, Shaib Ali Lal son of Khokhan Baig, he later rose to the rank of subedar major the very first subedar major who was a non Kator^{xxx} he retired in 1932. Sultan Jawan alias Manoor, is another brave son of soil who took active part in the Gilgit War of 1947. Sultan Khan Murdaan was born in 1924 at village Murdaan and join Chitral scouts in 1945 and took active part in 1948 War as Bren gunner, he embraced shahadat 40 kilometres short of Srinagar in a hand to hand fight with enemies. Another stalwart of the area and of 1947 war is Islam Shah who retired as naib subedar, he was enrolled in Chitral Scouts in 1932, he died a natural death in 1990. Ghair Dum Shah Chaweelo who has died in 2002 was another brave scout of Chitral.

Injigan has a predominant Ismaili sect adherents, there are Fatimid also who are regarded as the non .

The cultural history and heritage of the Injigan is heavily inspired by the Tajikistan, Badkhashan, Yarkhun, Kashgir which is a logical conclusion of the valley being as the entrance into the Chitral valley. The Jinan China utensils are a speciality of the area which used to come from the Kashgir and china; they were almost unbreakable and above all had the uniqueness to point out the poison in food thus these were very popular with the ruling class. Silver Mushraba also comes from Faizabad in Afghanistan and are given as dowry utensils. Kohkan Baigi is the name of extra large big Deg which were imported in thousands by the prince Kohkan Baig and hence it carries his name even today. Ghaan is another utensil which is made of walnut wood it is big in size the smaller version is called Langri. Tong is a vessel used for keeping milk, lassi and curd, it is the smallest of all utensils. Ghori is the equivalent of Madaani which is used for making curd out of milk.

Drosh

Drosh, I have finally made it here, left the Chitral Mess at 1400 hours luckily Captain Fayzan came to mess on a defender and he was going to Langurbat so I got the lift from him, he was rather embarrassed that I am sitting in the rear but this is how the army life goes but I do appreciate his concern.

Drosh is a magnificent fort, built in 1939 on a higher ground which overlooks the whole valley, at this place the Chitral River is joined by a small river coming from the north; Madaglasht, which is a predominant Persian speaking valley

comprising of few villages with ne odd Chitral Scouts post. On the back of the Mess and the fort, {mess is at the edge of the fort on the higher slope} there are two piquet's of British era, one is known as the Dommel named after the village which is down below and other one is known as Azeem piquet named after someone which I have to trace.

Mess service is poor by any standard, I had the lunch comprising of mutton karhai, very ordinary cooked with trace of lamb smell, salad again just average rather poor and now waiting for a cup of tae for half an hour without any trace of it. Otherwise a classic mess by design and style it is almost a replica of Chitral mess in the colour and design. One small corridor then ante room on left and dining hall on right with kitchen adjacent to dining hall and billiard room/library adjacent to ante room. It is all in wood, which makes it so special. Good silver and trophies, everywhere it is reminding of Lieutenant Colonel Murad Khan, I was thinking about him while sitting next to waterfall as why he committed suicide, was it something in the air or the area, maybe after spending few nights here I may understand him better. It is 1700 hours and sun is still setting its rays on the corner of mess and that speaks of the people who selected the place and designed it to have maximum sun in winter. It is much peaceful than Chitral, no more noise of motorcycles or busses only the constant melodic rhythm of water fall but after short time it also looks like a mental torture. Lot of greenery and flowers, roses are still in bloom, lawn is well manicured. Only three nights ago Major General Sana was staying the night here without knowing that it is going to be his last one. By 1725 hours the sunrays have left the mess building, it is cloudy anyway.

Drosh covers the approach towards the Chitral and Madaglasht, the River Chitral flows at its base {Drosh Town} and runs for another fifteen miles before making a right turn towards the Domel Nisar- Mirkhani-Arandu to enter the Afghanistan. In this way Drosh is the key fort, the base depot. Occasionally the snarl of a donkey rips through the silence and add a bass to the water melody to which I have become useful. To this is the added noise of football being hit hard. They play football every evening. The mosque ahs just called the faithful to the prayers. Electricity is the same as anywhere else, selected timings, which are generally abided by, but it is poor in watts, the generator than supplies the power.

Fort is narrow from inside and vehicle cannot reach mess, one has to climb a dozen stairs to reach it.

Drosh Killa.

Drosh is on the southern bank of River Chitral and Drosh Fort popularly known as Drosh Killa is on the northern banks of river Chitral, why the fort was not made on the southern bank is obvious when one looks at the area, The River Chitral is in fact a pass which leads to the Chitral the ancient caravan route was on the southern bank whose remains can be seen even today thus the fort was constructed primarily to keep an eye on the route and also to guard against the Dir insurgents.

There are two forts in Drosh one is known as Chitrali Fort and other as Drosh Killa, the former has been turned into a school as back as 1937 while other remained as headquarters of Chitral Scouts for almost fifty years till 1992.

Piquets are another enigma because they are only on the north and east of Fort. The fort is large, big, magnanimous and simple in construction, it is in tiers and have solid walls which are now broken and replaced with barbed wires. Originally there was only one entrance into the fort on the western side having a piquet it is disused now; a pity. There are two rings of fort , one which is uncovered by wall and other the proper fort where the gate leads you to the quarter guard and then into the fort. Presently there is another path which is for motors which can lead up to mess but one still has to climb stairs to reach to the mess. From quarter guard another inclined flight of stairs leads to te commandant office and from there to the mess. It si at quarter guard that a original wall painting has been preserved although refreshed every now and then which is a mirror of the past. It shows that almost everything on the northern bank of river belongs to Chitral Scouts and the assistant political agent who used to sit here instead of Chitral.

There are old maple and walnut trees everywhere, most strikingly the four maple trees at the four corners of the ground down below the mess building are eye catching , they are placed originally at the four corners of the ground in such a symmetry that there shadows almost covers the ground. Then there is another tree at the hockey ground which can now be called as football ground as none plays hockey now; it also shows how important hockey was in the past {1926}. This ground actually divides the whole complex of the fort, the barracks of troops are on the one side of ground and on the other these steep path takes the visitor into the fort arena.

Presently the No.3 Wing of Chitral Scouts, 42 Azad Kashmir Regiment and Mortar Battery of Chitral Scouts are sharing the fort, the infantry battalion is mainly using as the rear headquarters so are the all the wings, all kind of stores are here, the Ghee, tea, match, charpoy, salt to name few are located here. There is no dearth of accommodation. The Chitral Scouts training school is also here inside the fort complex. The whole fort is inclined in construction, there is hardly any level place less the hockey ground and the stony tennis court which is adjacent to the main gate of fort.

Kafiristan- Kalash & Bashgol- SouthWest Chitral

The Kafirs of Hindukush are the only physical evidence of Chitral's past. The 3000 odd Kafir living on the southern bank of River Chitral in three thickly vegetated valleys with pine, walnut, oak, maple trees; the entrance to these valleys is through a narrow gorge, are an enigma. Tribe still following pagan rites despite being so close to civilisation. They are not man eaters and neither roam in loin clothes, detest violence and generally remains merry. It seems as if they have been living in such remote, inaccessible valley since the time immortal. They at one time between 1000-1500 AD were powerful rulers of Kafiristan {Chitral} the very name Kafiristan was given by the Arabs to the area east of Badakshan{present day Chitral, & Nuristan province of Afghanistan} . The Kafirs had two main classification, the Red Kafir lived in the more fertile Western Kafiristan - Bash Gol{ gol is the common name for a stream, the valley takes its name from the stream which takes origin from Shah Salim Pass in north} and Kalash the Black Kafir or Sia Posh

occupied the Eastern Kafiristan. They established the first Aryan kingdom, the passage of Aryans moving down from the high north took place through this geographical corridor{Bash Gol-Chitral- Kunar}. The Red Kafir were the ruling class the true Aryans and black kafirs were the result of intermarriages and working class. In 13th Century a Kalash ruler Bulesingha was defeated and driven away from upper Chitral by the Rais , a century later Rajawai the last of Kalash ruler was defeated by the Muslims{ Mehtar of Chitral}. Kafiristan retained its identity and Emperor Babur acknowledges it in his 1529 AD autobiography, Emperor Babur was aware of the presence of Kafirs when he first occupied Kabul.

World first came to know about them in 1885- 89 when first the British military commission reconnoitred the valley and later Major Surgeon George Robertson spent almost two years among these Kafir and wrote about them . Robertson thus stands as the pioneer explorer of Chitral , however he stayed with the Bash Gol area Kafirs who are termed as Red Kafirs. Durand Line affected the Kafirs most and more than any other tribe. Being non violent in nature they only had the geography as their best defence and now this was demarcated. Not that it matters on ground but in a broad term it took away the support of Mehtar from them as Chitral under Durand Pact was obliged not to interfere in internal Afghan matters and vice versa.

In 1895 the Afghans carried out a Jihad against the Kafirs, either accept Islam, fight or pay tribute. Kafirs in the past have been a popular commodity as slaves for the

Afghans. Kafir's heartland is Bash Gol valley; the valley between River Chitral on north and Bash Gol in south, it is only at Chitral that area is bit plain. Resultantly the surviving Kafirs now inhabit the three ancient valley, Bhamboret, Birir and Rumbur however in the end they were almost exterminated in 1895 but managed to hold on to a narrow strip of land in lower Chitral. Majority of these Kafir embraced Islam and are known as sheikhs in society. *'Some twelve miles south of Chitral city and west of Chitral River, there lies the entry to the gorge, between the high and rocky cliffs, the gorge slopes gently upwards, fanning out into a number of smaller valleys and it is in these valleys that the last surviving Kafirs dwell'*, commented by Chitral Scouts commandant, Lieutenant Colonel Afzal in 1972. Afzal was privileged to witness the culture so close, last one to do so was Major Robertson in 1889; Afzal has highlighted the Kalash Kafirs whereas Robertson had highlighted Red Kafirs. There are three main valleys, Rumbir which is closest to Chitral in the south, Bambouret is adjacent to it and Birir further south almost opposite Drosh. All are on the right bank of River Chitral and in a crescent manner occupies all area south, of Chitral.

'Kafir tribe is a highly mixed people, i was struck on more than one occasion at finding a village where tall men with fair hair or light brown hair with pale blue eyes and a shorter type with black hair and olive skin existed side by side.... members of better classes showed signs of Aryans breeding in their good features ...a village chief in Bhumbirit told me 'our elders told me that our ancestors came from

Iran and Greece....An elderly farmer in Birir valley told me that their ancestors came from Siam^{xxxix}.

Very little is known about Kafir religion and rituals. ‘*Their original faith is a rather low form of idolatry, admixture of fire and ancestor worship. Imra is the supreme creator supported by a host of lesser deities; Giriz, Moni, Bagiz, Dizma, Krumai, Nirmali and others. Giz was the principal hero a virile warrior god. Kafirs believe in supernatural fairies known as Deo-Log, evil spirits is known as Shitan...one has to go high in mountains to invoke good fairies, the evil lives everywhere. Kafirs believe in hell and heaven known as baishat and dozegh respectively. Two particular divinities Mahandeo and goddesses Jestak { six feet high and eighteen inches broad wooden black plank} are held high in Bumboret valley . Fundamental ritual act in Kafir worship is the sacrifices of domestic animals, a proper sacrifice requires properly lit fire at altar. Few branches of Juniper are thrown into flames with occasion twigs of holly oak, walnut or almond are also used; meat is distributed among the worshippers^{xxxii}.*

. The marriage another social indicator of humanity is different too; every village had a male bull responsible for continuity of race. This concept is much closer to the Spartans concept of ideal warriors however here the intention and application seems to be different in the absence of any military laurels Marriage an ancient social custom is celebrated in temple ‘ Jestak- Aan’ by Kafirs. Bride and bridegroom enters the temple led by a goat, the goat is alter sacrificed by a boy virgin’ on Jesta Mosh’ , who later

sprinkles some blood of animal on the Jestak as well. Bride has to eat five bread cakes before they are declared as husband and wife. Death rites are also conducted at Jestak-Aan, corpse is palced in arough wooden coffin with a loose lid. For two days and nights the friends and relatives of the deceased stay at temple , eating and drinking, performing ceremonial dances around coffin, singing and dancing, in case of female dead body there no dance but singing. The religious priest is the most important person in the village, known as Shamman. He is an orator and performer as he has to perform religious rites in a opera manner. He creates hypnotic sensations around himself. Kafirs do not bury their dead, the coffin is left in open with stone lids on top at ‘ Maahan da Jao’ {place of many coffins}. Giz is n red Kafir feminine deity protector of home, family and the private life, pregnancy, birth, children, love, marriages, sickness. In the Black Kafir valleys Sajigor,Jatz, Prebal and Warin does the same task. Rich Kafirs do erect the effigies made in wood over the coffins of beloved one. It is no more in use as old sculptors have died and so has the craft also. Kafirs of Birir valley are more orthodox and follow the customs more religiously, In 1971 there were only 2000 Kafirs living in Birir valley alone. ‘Kafirs of Rumbir and Bambouret valley are beginning to give up some of their ancient customs and traditions’; they now dig graves for their dead. Orthodox do not send their children to school and neither entertain tourist as house guest.

Their women still stroll the Chitral bazaar wearing colourful attire hardly anyone can point out a Kafir man as he wears no distinct dress item. Women young and old all dress

alike, a long black woollen gown ‘ Sangachs’ tied in the waist with a woollen sash either white or light grey. On the head is ‘Kopesi’ an ornamental cap , heavily decorated with several rows of cowrie shells, hair most elaborately dressed in long and thin plaits. Kafirs do not poultry meat and considers it impure.^{xxxiii} Kafirs are fond of music but use only drums of various size and types, motly women dances and men occasionally joins in ‘ The dancing party consisted of of all ages groups, young girls, withered old women and mere children...they formed up into groups of four or five each girl with her left arm around the waist of other girl to her left and her right arm across the shoulders of her partner on the right..cross and circles in a series of complicated patterns, displaying skills and natural elegance, rhythm kept by a seemingly wordless song with monotonous sound , from time to time we could hear the sharp and hollow thump of a big drum’.^{xxxiv} There are three types of dances among Kafirs irrespective of occasion{death or marriage} and are performed simultaneously one after the other. First is known as Dosha, second as Drazhailak and last one as Cha. Kafir is a female dominated tribe, women do not observe purdah, remarkable number of women have chestnut hair with percentage having blue eyes, they are forbidden to enter the sanctuaries of god except on special occasions, even the normal religious rites have preference to men.. They ae not allowed to keep comb in the house rather leave it under a stone near a water stream, they set their hair after three days. During menstruation period women are segregated from the community for five or six days in a special house ‘ Bashaleni’, every fair size village have one. Uncooked food is left on a stone opposite the Bashaleni and one of the inmates comes out

and collects it. If for any reason any women from outside has to go inside Bashaleni then she has to strip naked before entering it and on coming out has to take a complete bath . Three main festivals of Kalash are Jyoshi { Chilimjuich} in May and last for three days. Women and girls gather flower and decorate houses, sheep and goats are sacrificed, dancing and wine drinking goes on in every house, milk is sprinkled over goddesses Jestak. Porh is celebrated in September; it is the most ancient rite, the village male bull who was left in spring to live on the highland with special diet comes down and breed with women not bearing child, it is observed in Birir valley only. Chownas {Chittermas} the last festival is held from 21st -31st December every year, it is festival of grapes harvesting too. Fire is lighted at sunset , goat sacrificed to Jestak, In Kafir mythology the Beromine{great giant} who lives in Siam comes only once a year to Kafiristan, he is the eldest of all giants and helps in all kind of issues, in matter of death, happiness and crops; his altar is known as Malosh. There are no set principles to be followed or accepted to be member of Kafir tribe rather it is observance of the centuries old custom and rites, dress regulations, traditions on birth and death and marriage , in nut shell it is 'Dastoor' which has to be adhered to be member of clan. Any violation of it and one finds himself out of the tribal allegiance. Their house are more primitive than the houses in Chitral, each one looks like an independent walnut fortress, they display most subtle ingenuity with due regard to weather. Goat is the most important animal in Kafir life, its head decorates the temples entrances, it is main source of meat for them.

Kafirs believe in one god called Dezwa or Khodai, they have no idol for Dezwa, for offering to him they assemble in an open space and sacrifice goat in his name. Imra is the other supreme creator, Sajogor is revered in all three valleys. Ingaw is a Deo entrusted with good crops, Katomoshi or Ush is a goddesses; children are supplicated from her. Zoz or Jakch is a god for breeding goats, shigan or Sidga is another deity, when a child is sick then sacrifices are made to Sidga. Istogosh Deo or istong is a diety for small children, when a child wears clothes for first time then a goat is sacrificed, the blood of the goat is smeared over the child's forehead, after this baptism the child is recognised as a Kafir. The devils mother is known as Badilock, birth of Giz is remarkably close to divine books, a lady by the name of Utz had no husband but on orders of Imra she conceived Giz her son who was born after eighteen months, he is attributed of bringing his mother alive with the help of medicine Imra

Shekhandeh, these are converts from Kafir religion into the folds of Islam willingly. They constitute almost 1.5% of Chitral population. They are settled in Bhumbirit, Birir upper valleys like Langurbat and Jinjerait. They are also immigrants from Afghanistan, previously they were known as Red Kafir and were living on the western Kafiristan but after the 1895 Jihad majority of them embraced Islam, even now whenever any Kafir accepts Islam he is known as sheikh. Family life is compact and a normal family comprises of 15 odd members including the three generations living together. Male enjoys the polygamy and women works in the field, in

short their cultural and social life has not been affected much by change of religion. Afghanistan after 1893 had carried out an all out massacre of the Red Kafir or Broghul driving them into the Chitral Kafiristan. Afghanistan after 1893 had carried out an all out massacre of the Red Kafir or Broghuls driving them into the west { Chitral's Kafiristan}. Majority of the kafirs had accepted Islam and are known as sheikhs moreover the Kafiristan itself became Nuristan in Afghanistan

Drosh Fort 1899.

Drosh Fort's construction started in May 1899 and was completed in October 1900. The fort is on the northern bank of River Chitral, on a higher ridge overlooking the complete valley and route of River Chitral and River Madaglasht. Thus from its sitting it is obvious that main threat was from the afghans and the southern circle was the most volatile. In the ancient times the track from Bashgal in Afghanistan entered into Chitral through Arandu and then following the hill track it passes through Domel Nisar-Mirkhani-Drosh-Ayun-Chitral-Garm Chasma and then exiting through Shah Salim Pass. Thus two separate entities one on the southern bank and other on Northern Bank were flourishing. There were very few crossing points on the river and even then the hanging bridges were unable to take the full load of laden camel, horse or mule caravan, only in military expedition a force was able to cross it. In summer the river was in full fury as now and in winter the crossing was possible.

Drosh Fort is built on the ridge in a multi tier design, which is inclined, and hardly any level space is available and even less was in the past. Fort is rectangular in design having mud barracks all along the four walls; these barracks are the distinct hallmark of the fort. The wooden pier style corridor along walls are narrow yet wide enough to allow two men to cross each other. Firing points are available after every seven feet; the best part of the fort was in its rapid concentration of fire and soldiers at all time mainly due to the design. Four piquet at four corners along with equal number of small entrances built of iron doors and one main entrance, which in the past had a gigantic iron and wood door. Quarter guard is on the right side of main gate inside the fort.

First major expansion of the fort took place in 1921 after the third afghan War when new barracks were constructed and second one took place in 1939 and then in mid eighties it was almost complete in every sense when the headquarters were moved back to Chitral. Since then the fort is living in past nostalgia as lack of manpower is barely enough to keep it working.

In the original pattern the complete northern bank was only with the military and political administration. The road leading from Fort to the bridge on the River Chitral was and still is the property of Chitral Scouts and that include the complete bazaar with over two hundred shops. Now the bazaar which has sprung up along the main road is known as new bazaar and Scouts bazaar is called the old bazaar.

Initially the commandant house was inside the fort but in 1920 it was constructed outside the fort and then finally

demolished in 2010 to make room for the expansion of Scouts school. Chitral scouts garden is located across the river, this is one of the largest gardens among all corps of Frontier corps, the old landing ground which was built in 1921, last had flight in 1954 and since then is abandoned and turned into a cricket field with proper brown pitch, it is a fantastic field.

Fort had three grave yards, one known as cemetery had both the Muslim and Christian military personnel's and is located at the south eastern end, the Hindu graveyard was situated a mile further east but now a days there are no remnants of that graveyard, however the other cemetery is maintained by the scouts and the army unit stationed in Drosh {they are here since 2009}.

The contractors bring fresh ration, fodder for animals, petrol and other commodities as they have been doing it for last hundred years. The Chitral Mountain Artillery is also stationed here, it has been its home base for a century and despite all other changes this has remained in vogue. Mounted infantry also originally had their birth here, the stables are still functional and the horses, mules, donkeys all live together, {mounted infantry only looks after the horses and animal transport is responsible for donkeys}.

Presently the lush green hockey field serves as football ground with daily matches being played between the asr-maghrib prayers, it is a treat to the eyes to see such colourful attires running around a ball. In the parade ground, which is now known as Murad Ground the civilians are allowed to play the games in the evening, as there are no other

Full Moon at Chitral

sports facilities available to them, similar is the attitude towards the use of cricket field.

Mountain Hospital was also at Drosh before it was a also shifted to the Chitral. The present half mounting barracks were once the hospital wards, there are two such barracks, the bigger one was general ward and smaller one was bifurcated into officers' ward and offices. The operation room was built later in 1938 {present MRC}. All barracks inside have two rooms, one inner which is larger in size and other a small room, wooden planks and mud has been used in original construction and there is no trace of iron. The bricks were used later either in expansion or in restoration.

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Fort from inside is all green, chinar, apple, pear trees are almost everywhere yet the four chinar trees at the four corners of the office barrack are worth appreciating; they were planted with precision and then looked after for long from grazing horses and other animals to reach such heights. They are as old as the fort itself.

Drosh Officers mess dining hall.

Words at times lose their value because they are used daily and for everything thus the word impressive may look odd but this is what it feels to be sitting here at midnight when outside the yellow glow of full moon is getting pale because the moon is now up the mess, for hours in a stoned state of mind I have been staring at the two passes the pass on left the Chitral and on the right or northern leads to Madaglasht.

The hall is covered with walnut wood almost touching the ceiling all around, with hand carved fire places, shields on wall the PMA, Engineers, Punjab Regiment, FWO, head trophies of Markhoor are staring from all corners with the head mascot on the southern wall kept an eye on me while I was having the dinner alone. Three silver trophies the bronze infantryman holding and charging with the bayonet rifle, the big silver bowl in the centre and traditional ibex trophy without which no room of Chitral Scouts seems to be complete. On the far end at the fire place half a dozen silver ware and a tray below the Markhoor trophy, windows are on the southern side with ample space in the front to have the breakfast while having a look at the lawn and valley down below especially the Chitral Pass is in the centre. Ceiling is also made of wood panels with chandelier hanging down , two ceiling fans and two lights on each end completes the scenery .

Hall and mess are deserted now and they are in this state since 1992 when the headquarters move from here to Chitral, it looks haunted now, I sat alone in dark in the ante room and felt the company of all past visitors, I thought of Commandant Colonel Murad as what made him commit suicide, I don't believe that he was upset on his posting that speaks low of him. Did he really thought of himself as indispensable after commanding the Chitral for twelve long years, there was another commandant back in 1937-1947 but he left his post in a jovial mood so why Muard committed suicide. I have no plausible answer to his actions. Maybe he was instable like most such persons, lets not forget that he was a poet also, a bachelor, a lost love. Who knows, maybe

he was insane or he was high on that night but on what that made him took his life. Sitting and looking at the Chitral pass I thought of the 'Man who would be King', it is similar to Murad's life.

Madaglasht are another enigma, who are they and how come the Persian language and customs have survived in so many years and centuries or even millenniums. Are they lost soldiers of Darius or Feroze who was running away from Alexander, is it possible that they entered from the Bashgal Valley or Arandu and instead of going into the Chitral valley they took the northern valley, similarly may be the Alexander's soldiers took the north western valley in their chase and they ended up at the Kalash Valley. The Kalash Valley is on the opposite bank of River Chitral just across the Drosh.

The old caravan route is on the southern bank of the river the reason being that they never wanted to cross the river with laden horses and camels. Thus the whole route encompasses the southern part of present day Chitral, including the Lotkow valley leading straight to Kashkar {TirchMir}. Even the name of River Chitral is controversial, from Drosh down to Arandu it should be known as River Drosh, as River Chitral is only christened with this name after the amalgamation of river Lotkow and river Yarkhun just miles west of Chitral Town.

The Drosh has the same place in relation to Chitral what Jamrud Fort has to Khyber Pass. The Chitral starts from here and finishes at Chitral a mere 40 odd miles this is what Chitral was in past.

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It is strange feeling to sit alone in a room which at some time in past had a glorious time where the presidents and prime ministers had dined and laughed, now it is haunted never to have the same glory again. The fort was constructed on 1899 and commissioned in 1900 , probably this mess was constructed then or few years later because it was almost religious to have the mess for the officers and there were few infantry battalions stationed here along with artillery pieces. From 1929 the aircraft started making landings here it must be a great day for the natives to see the aircraft coming and going. What went through their minds was it an end of the world to them or the ultimate symbol of whiter race superiority.

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The PMA shield has a history because it was presented by Major General Rahat Latif Butt who came here in 1981 but he had been here in 1954 as a cadet himself , what a feeling to be at the same place where you have been there as a cadet and now as a commandant. He has written about that in the visitors book of Chitral Mess .

In the darkness and in the solitude of the night the Markhoor looks almost alive, its long hair hanging down from his chin just like an old religious man. Here the fear is not of any mortar or artillery shell as in Miranshah but that of fairies and werewolves and other such things, the place looks ideal for such ventures. What about the hidden history of the mess, the scandals the murders the gossips ,at least we know about one the murder and about others one had to run his imagination and there is no end to that.

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It was Captain James of 14th Punjabis who married the local girl in 1899 on the Christmas day the background of this is that James had gone on the hunting while on leave and it was at OsiakGol that he felt down almost killing himself but was saved by a local girl who had gone out to fetch the water and she dragged him to safety , looked after him and even nursed him and that was the reason for that love story ending in such a happy ending. But the story did not finished here because next year the Captain James died while on hunting at the same place.

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Full Moon at Drosh, 19th September 2013.

This time the full moon stretched for over three nights, first night at Chitral Officers Mess two nights ago when I spotted it and since I was monitoring it for last one week thus I was confident about it, it rose from the mountains above the mess , the wall across the River Chitral and slowly travelled over the mess tree and making a loop came over head, playing hide and seek through the maple leaves. The Chitral town basked in its yellow glow, I text Reena about it, thought of my children and wife and mother as much of my life revolves around this full moon. In my childhood lying on the cot with my mother on the roof and watching the full moon. My aunt narrating me the stories. It was common fable that the grandma is knitting the wheel, it was called Chanda Mama. The word Chanda is since used to point towards the beloved, it is common pet name of all girls apart from gurya. Time passed by and I forgot about the full moon for decade and it was neither in military academy nor in field exercises

but at Siachen in 1988 that I saw and fell in love with moon forever. I had come out of my igloo in the frozen month of January at over 18000 feet give and take few feet but I got my insignia of mountaineering there thus it was definitely over 18000 feet. The moon outside was fascinating , I pissed which was the reason of my coming out of the warm igloo and felt nirvana. Only then I saw the moon in its full glory. The mountains all around as far as eye can travel were covered in white thick cream of snow and ice. The Eagle Peak, the twin towers, the narrow cliff, the deep gorge and glacier down below were all visible and pure white. I stood there for eternity, nothing was in my mind but the sheer magnitude and magnum of beauty of nature. I was in awe of it and need not to move but at last the cold forced me to go inside. Probably next time it was blizzard and next time it was partial cloudy and that was the end of it.

Then came love affairs, one with my wife under the full moon , I was lying in a bushy stream just to have a glance of her when she would walk by at her after dinner walk with her colleague. Writing letters and reading them under full moon. Then acme the tragic part and the suffering of a lost love to be borne under the full moon. In next phase it was flying in full moon, it was always conducted in full moon conditions thus it became a second nature to be aware of it. Watching Karachi and surrounding islands on a calm full moon with sea waves touching the land, even the tortoises were visible, the city lights and the harbour, the airport's runway lights and their changing colours as one approaches them in a glide. Next it was Thailand Kohpagangan island in the arms of a German lady watching the full moon and only

then I saw how the sea waves are termed as high tides and how human tides corresponds to it. Back to life and a walk under full moon with my school heart girl Reena near her hostel and the aroma of the night queen flowers. The marriage and the full moon slowly and gradually just faded away , then came children and the mountains but I think I have omitted one of the most eventful full moon , the one I saw at K-2 base camp with Pink Floyd and the hashish; it changed my life forever and I acme back to it after few months and saw it again without any worry of food or place to sleep.

With my children I enjoyed it lying in the cool summer of Skardu for two seasons watching it to come from the north west of my house, I enjoyed it my pack of dogs and their pups holding them in my arms , I saw it with snow all around walking alone under its spell towards the glacier with my house behind me.

Then came Glasgow, the full moon was then my link to my past, to all my life because I had left all of it for nothing, everything was gone except this full moon, I gave night duties under its light I came back from library, club, bar under its spell. I dreamed with my eyes open when ever it was in full glory. I had it last again at Thailand with Reena and other one at Aitcheson but never again with my children and wife since Skardu. Last full moon was at Hydapass thinking about from where Alexander crossed it and then having almost five successive full moons in North Waziristan with hardly any lapse of concentration some of them were spent with the artillery duel with the miscreants going on under its light and now this one.

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Now I don't think of anyone in particular, yes Reena comes to my mind my mother comes to my mind because I have seen quite of these with her lying on the cot in the village on summer nights thinking and talking of life and the beauty of it.

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Madaglasht.

Madaglasht is a north-western valley of Chitral or more precisely that of Drosh. Its fame is in its being Persian speaking, Persian culture, 2000 odd families living in a remote area. They are also famous for being arms manufacturer of highest esteem in the past and now for weaving and knitting woollen sweaters and socks.

I went there out of curiosity on 19th September on a public transport, I left the Drosh around 1500 hours as the jeep intend going that direction leaves the town at same time, there are two methods of going there one is the public transport which i have mentioned and there are not more than few vehicles that go there, other is to hire the public taxi mostly Toyota Binjo cars which can also take you there , the jeep fare was rupees 200 , i am not sure about the taxi fare. There are no hotels at Madaglasht and any tourist intends staying night has to lodge himself with villagers. I did not knew anybody and just a sense of adventure took me there.

The track leading to Madaglasht starts just on the northern edge of Drosh, initially the track is good as compared to other mountainous tracks but after twenty odd

minutes it starts becoming ascending, narrow, stony and dangerous. The Sheeshu River flows all along, it has clear water which is coming from numerous brooks, fountains, springs that falls into it on regular interval. At times its bed is broad but never is it too narrow. There are villages on other side too, village is a wrong word rather few houses or even lone house perched high on mountains amidst the forest.

The journey kept on going, jumps and more jumps, one of the passenger in the rear puts his glass wrapped in a cloth behind our seat and we two sitting in the front seat did not objected to it as it is the common custom here , none complains because tomorrow it will be his turn to face the same dilemma. We had two breaks in between where the driver put water in radiator and passengers had a smoke. Most of the passengers were wearing jeans also, all in all we were twelve male passengers with no female on board..

We drove through small packets of habitation, the overall scenery was dry but after almost three hours we reached near green belt and this was start of Madaglasht area. The Madaglasht word holds true for a an area but among them one village also carry the same name which was my destination. This valley is peaceful and as such no requirement of even having a scout post. The scenery short of Madaglasht not only differs from the other in terms of the tree but also in the pattern of their graves, almost all graves were covered with wooden coffin something very peculiar to the Kafirs. I saw three shrines also one of the very first that i saw in Chitral. Jeep finally stopped at Madaglasht, a small mountainous hamlet, we stopped on the home bank of a

wooden bridge , the real village is on the other side where driver took me there and we came across Naib Subedar Ali Nawaz of the Chitral scouts he is retired now since 2007. He was referred by the same scout who came to drop me at the Drosh. I was mentally ready to spend the night in the village guest room on payment but Ali took me to his home.

Ali's home is small at least from the direction through which we entered, a small lawn having fruit trees , apples and pears with few space reserved for growing up of kitchen vegetables, the river flowing next to it. Ali was busy in harvesting his field but now he left everything and just concentrated on being a host. I met his children, three in number all in toddler phase and one of them was going to school, later i learnt that Ali in total have six children, four daughters and two sons. His two elder daughters are studying science, one in class 12th and other in matric , the third one being grade seventh. His daughter Riffat who is studying in matric came and shook my hand which is something very unusual in this part of world but then this is what Persian culture is all about. She is one of the most prettiest girl i have come across in Chitral, blue eyes and fair colour with good height, very soft spoken , she sat with me and converse and I thought of my daughter who is of same age and immediately started liking her like my own daughter. I asked her many questions about her school, her family and so on. They all were speaking Persian, the young ones just jumping around but in a pleasant way, no crying or shouting or abusing. Ali's cousin a post master who has recently retired also join us and being retired we both had many commonalities. I saw Ali going out and inquired about where he is going and he

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pleasantly mentioned shop. I was little worried lest he purchase anything for dinner but he just calmly waved his hand and went about his a business.

I learnt that whole village is comprising of Ismaili faith Muslims and there are few Sunnis as well, i have seen one odd flag depicting the jamait uleema islam at the start of the village. I also noticed free movement of womenfolk which is s so common in Punjab but so rare in this part. Evening was now growing along, weather was bit cool{Madaglasht is at 6000 feet}. We moved inside into the hujra, a medium size room having carpet and cushions on floor , pictures of Ali Nawaz in frames in uniform adores the fire place, few religious posters but nothing unusual in any sense. The washroom very neat and clean. I inquired about the electricity and water arrangement in the village. There is a hydel power house which supplies the electricity to the village around the clock , it is less but still better than nothing. Water is agin coming from fresh water spring. There are two schools for primary education and one middle school and one college all less one are being run by the Agha Khan community welfare organisation. The teachers are good and qualified. In summer there is one month holiday in July and two months off in winter January-February. In winter there is heavy snow fall and all routes are practically blocked. The other end of Madaglasht is also blocked with just a foot track that leads to the Goolen a small village north of Chitral. Thus people can travel from here to Chitral but it is only used by foreigner trekkers; no more there due to security threats.

For an hour we played with kids, i was feeling embarrass for not having any gifts with me for the family, i gave rupees 1000 to Riffat to buy books and later gave all my change 250 rupees to the toddlers. Ali Nawaz later joins in and we talk about the militia life , he was trained as a bomb disposal expert but alter he opted for retirement as he wanted to have more time with his family. He is now looking after his meagre lands but happy and content. His elder daughter also came in to say hello , she also shook hands and exchange pleasantries so did the third daughter. Dinner was ready. The utensils were taken from this room by his two daughters and Ali helped them by putting the sheet on carpet and laying the plates. He had cooked a chicken the highest sign of hospitality, i felt bit sorry for causing him such , rice and salad along with yogurt. It was excellent cooking, delicious and very aromatic. We three males had the meal and later Ali took all the items away and i believe then others had the meal.

Postmaster narrated me tat they all are Ismaili, their forefathers came from Afghanistan but their Persian is different from them, they had opted for this land . I have my own reasons to partly believe this aspect of history. Thousand years ago or at least five hundred years ago the population was very less and not more than twenty odd families must have been residing here. Why and how they acme here will remain a mystery, they can also be a runaway soldiers just like the people living in Kalash. Apart from their language there is nothing peculiar bout them on the surface but inside this cultural variation and openness is the key to understand them.

Ali laid down elaborate bedding comprising of few mattresses and quilt. I inquired about the hand knitted sweaters and he went around and brought half a dozen of them i bought one for rupees 1800/-. Ali gave me a pair of woollen socks as a souvenir and in return i gave him my sunglasses. Night was peaceful. I left the door unlocked, a sense of fear came momentarily but it was natural and i soon over rid it and enjoyed a pleasant night rest. The vehicle in the morning leaves at 0500 hours thus i was up at 0430 when Ali came with warm water bowl for shave, soon he came with three parathas and two fried eggs along with cup of tae. His wife must have been busy in preparing them for half an hour ago. There was no time so i packed the food and Ali carried my small bag and we reached the jeep stand where despite all of Ali's protest i agreed to sit in the rear of jeep as the front seats are normally reserved for females in the valley.

It was a dangerous journey under moon light, still dark and driving through the mountainous track which is rugged and zigzagged. I was sitting on the temporary mat along with three other passengers and three were standing with the iron bars at the rear, jeep was open. I wished and sensed that safety is more in standing with your eyes facing the road as only then you can make out the progress of jeep. In my case being sitting would be bit too late in jumping out in case jeep traverse into the river down below. These thoughts kept my mind occupied. We climbed up the steep track then down, another sharp turn and then another sharp descend and this continued for an hour before jeep started staggering and soon came to an halt, it ah darn out of diesel. We had practically blocked the road or track and now there

were five or six other vehicles behind us , our driver got the diesel from them {six litres} by sucking through their fuel tank and this is how i reached back to Drosh by 0900 hours with very sore back yet i was full of admiration for the Ali Nawaz. I have seen the Madaglasht the Persian culture and got an insight into them.

Mirkhani Fort. 24th September 2013

On 24th September 2013, i had left Drosh at 1500 hours for the Mirkhani, it seems difficult proposition to do so because i am lazy and if i spend a night at one place then it seems almost a miracle if i am able to leave but i had to do so . Mirkhani Fort is on main Lowari-Drosh road, it is half an hour drive from Drosh and the fort itself s visible about five minutes short of it as it stands high on a ridge overhanging the River Chitral which makes two omega bends here and then set course for Afghanistan via Dommel Nisar and Arandu .

I travelled by a public transport, i got a car taxi from Drosh, it was already full but the scout and the driver was kind to accommodate me and the elderly person sitting in front seat despite all my protests vacated the seat, i feel embarrass over this .En route i saw the fort at Nagur which was built by the local royalty in 1929. The fort is impressive and looks like a military fort, it has one hanging bridge which connects it with the main road, at night the bridge is closed down there is a post of scouts also to ensure this. The reason is obvious the other bank of river {southern} connects with Afghanistan and Kafiristan and as such it s closed down. In

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old days the Nagur was one of the key place for crossing the river.

I got down at Mirkhani Fort and introduced myself to the sentry who was courteous enough to offer me a seat in his post. The wing commander was away on a tour to post but was expected to be back before sun down. I sent a chit to the subedar major Akhtar, who after few minutes came out and took me inside. We sat in the lawn and he ordered for food and tea. Food was good, comprising of rice, mutton curry , salad, rooti and customary fruit. Mean while he arranged for my accommodation.

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The fort looks very small after the Drosh Fort stay, a single storied barrack on both ends running all along. The length of fort is not more than 100 yards with a width of another fifty yards. No more wooden barracks or huts, only two exits one at the front and other at rear with another one on eastern wall which looks like make shift. One sentry piquet at the gate and that's all. I was wondering about the officers' accommodation when the sentry took my luggage and i followed him, we exit from the far gate and all of a sudden the full beauty of the fort was revealed. The area between the fort wall and the ridge which originally was meant for stables have now been converted into a beautiful garden having accommodation for troops and in 2009 a beautiful three room hut was constructed; i had one room there.

The mountain battery which came here in the aftermath of 2011 attack is now being relieved with another battery from another regiment , they are arriving today and a tea break was being arranged in their honour. I just kept

sitting in the lawn of the hut enjoying the beauty of the area. Being on higher ground the view is extended , with river almost 500 feet down below making its two turns, across the bank of the river the green fields of the Nagur with few house, the fort is not visible from here{Nagur fort}. However a look down reveals the sandy beach of the river which is presently used for playing cricket. It is only now that water has receded otherwise in peak summer it covers everything down below. One thing which i have learnt here is that all old villages are on relative higher ground , much higher than normal and all new comers are the one having their houses built near the bank. Thus one can make out which locality is old and native.

Lieutenant Colonel Tauqeer the wing commander also arrived and we had a cup of tae together, the initial few moments with any commander are very important because the whole show can be made or break in these moments. But so far i have found all the officers very respectful and helpful. The other three officers were Major Ali Ahmed the battery commander of outgoing battery and two captains namely Tjdar and Fayyaz. I was also invited to join in the tae break being arranged. Typical army tea break with cold chicken, rice and salad. There was a dance and music as well.

Later at night we all four sat around the lawn, wing commander had gone to his residence which is also outside the fort his parents are on a visit these days. Major Ali turned out to be a poet of Urdu, he gave me his copy of poetry generally good. He is romantic, nature loving and like all military Urdu poets he is sensitive. He for hours recited his poetry while other two captains long ago hit the bed. Moon

still came out and what a view it gave. At night i went to sleep, kind of youngsters that they gave me an independent room.

The day is routine, everyone getting up late, the sun rays are falling on the western bank of the river and the fort is still shrouded in the dim light. The lone rooster has been calling his shouts on regular basis but with no hen in sight it calms down. I had got my first cup of tea and now waiting for the clothes to come back from dhobi. Another long yell from rooster. In the morning, i just sat out looking at the river and surroundings. Had a breakfast of paratha and omelette , then met the wing commander at 1030 for group photographs which was arranged outside the main gate, elaborate arrangements, traffic was halted for the duration. My other inquisitiveness was to meet Naik Nasir who was the lone survivor of Darashot post attack of August 2011 in which 22 scouts were killed. He was currently posted at a post but wing commander called him down for the interview.

I later roamed around with a scout as guide. There are few shops as well on the outer periphery of the fort, a custom check post and meteorological station is also located. A new mosque is being constructed by the wing also.

We all less wing commander departed for the half an hour drive to Dommel Nissar, the battery commander had to show the new officers the area thus i was lucky to have a lift in the army vehicle.

The journey from Mirkani takes almost 45 minutes of drive, the track is not that bad rather it is grand when compared to

the other parts of Chitral, no dangerous curves still any novice can end up at river bed and that was one reason i sat in the rear seat amidst two captains they insisted on mine sitting in front but i regretted, and rather sat with them in the rear between two captains giving all the pleasure of window seats. The scenery is similar to any other part of northern areas, a river running along, track winding through the mountains occasional vehicles carrying wood coming from Arandu direction , i just noted only four vehicles enroute one reason is the road ahead of Dommel Nisar is closed due to mud slides. I saw the Katusi post enroute and the bridge over it which has been rebuilt by army engineers, the FWO camp and then few more turn and the fort was in sight. The rocks lying on the side of road are iron ore which is precious commodity. No shop, no village on the road; we entered the Dommel Fort. The track goes upward and then stops at a parking bay with few trucks standing, the fort gate and the silhouette of its wall, the wing commander's office which was constructed only recently by Lieutenant colonel Tauqeer stands out as a piece of architect. The maple tree has been preserved and it goes through the veranda of the office, beautiful design. The aroma of fresh pure natural wood fills the air when i entered it. Lieutenant Colonel Naveed is the wing commander, he is from artillery , slim but very cordial, jovial, humble and courteous. I glanced at the wing commanders board and saw Major Ali Imran's name over there.

Naveed is a good company and its after along that i have enjoyed conversation nothing intellectual just pure military fun, he was DQ in Lahore brigade{114} and how the things work thee , one really feels pity with the staff officers

but now he is enjoying it. Another retired officer came he is working with FWO had been working in the Chitral Scouts in the past, from OTS and from COAS regiment but nothing extraordinary about him same talk about plots and other. He was narrating how he was swindle by his own course mate with his commutation . He left and then after some time we had the lunch in SM's office which is adjacent to wing commander's. Lunch was god, rice, chicken fried but good one and the standard Mountain Dew cold drink followed by the fruit of pears, apples and grapes. It was evening time the artillery offices left for Mirkani. The Dommel Nisar life is slow rather boorish and lonely and evening games seems to be the right recipe for it; they play volleyball the king of troops games.

Volleyball is an excellent game requires little space and over sixteen players can play. Not smashing but gentle hitting, players keep on coming and joining the teams , one team led by the captain and soon wing commander also joined in both good players. Game lasted till Maghreb prayers when nit was called off.

I did not consumed my dinner rather went to work and slept around midnight.

Dommel Nisar.

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It is 1930 hours , at Dommel Nisar Fort, the fort was constructed in 1942, it is bigger than Mirkani but much smaller than Drosh. It is double storied, cemented brick, thick 20 odd feet high walls with high Iron Gate on one end and a small exit at the other end. It is 200 yards by 50 yards in a straight plain rocky ground with river Chitral running along its western wall separated by a narrow stony track. On the further far bank which in this case becomes the west bank or far bank is inhabited by two odd families with half a dozen females working in the small elongated field wearing red chaddar{only 30%}. The fort is constructed in a elongated pattern mainly due to the dictate of the ground thus you end up facing the rather gradual high mountain wall. On the southern end the River Chitral takes its rather second last bend and merges to the west. On the east is that is the back of the fort the again high hillock blocks the view and provides protection; the plenty of high maple trees which by any standard are not older than a century almost obscure the view.

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I can hear the consistent and persistent yet pleasant noise of river water running fast , it is regularly interrupted by the prayer calls on the loud speaker, here it is really penetrating as there is no other noise to over run it , the water flow on the other hand provides a back ground medley. The prayer call is brief and to the point. Dommel Nisar is the in centre between the Mirkani & Arandu , it is the last fort built by British on this River Chitral axis, ahead are the posts like Langurbat and then Arandu, on the northern side coming from Mirkani the road is excellent but alas only for a brief distance but FWO is working on the widening of the road till Arandu with UAE sponsorship which certainly will bring a strategic

change both economically and culturally; defence is debatable because with the construction of road coupled with the opening of Lowari Tunnel the centuries old issue will be resolved, a loop is thus being provided to the Afghans and people living in Central Asia to move freely southward through Arandu Pass via Dommel Nisar-Mirkhani, turning left and moving through Lowari in winter too. It is the shortest, safest and most economical route from the Mughul heartland crossing Oxus and then instead of moving through Broghul into Chitral and then crossing Darkot Pass towards the Gilgit and into Kohistan before hitting river Indus. Other route traditional route is through Zebak- following Bashgol Valley into former Kafiristan and present Nuristan of Afghanistan , hitting Arandu at Birkot. The earlier caravan had no option but to follow the river which now is known as Kunar and hitting Jalalabad or the Kabul- Kunar conflux which roughly 100 miles south of Arandu enters into plains of Peshawar; the Khyber Pass. The major limitation in the past were the militant and often hostile tribes who each eyed the trade caravan as a booty , they as honourable tribesmen merely preferred the caravans to pass through their territory and in return getting the security toll. Now this all has taken new dimension; the sectarian vermin, the majority of population living near Oxus is the follower of shia and Ismaili sect which the Sunni tribes of Nuristan, Kunar, Jalalabad, Kabul, Bajaur, Khar, and Dir are not very friendly; unfriendly is rather a very diplomatic word because much of present day violence in the area is mainly and chiefly attributed to this madness along with historical variations.

Dommel Nisar was constructed mainly for any Afghan threat and not the perceived Russian threat. Drosh was constructed in 1900 and Mirkani in 1940 thus in between these years the major and only serious conflict after the signing of Durand Line Pact in 1893; was the Third Afghan War of 1919. Mirkani- Dommel Nisar Axis is rather the exhibition ground of great game and there is no solid logic to deny the perception that almost thousand years ago the similar defensive fortification and strategy was adopted by the Kafirs against the invading Aryans and later Turk Muslims, the only pint of difference is on the choice of banks of river as the line of fortifications. Even today the old track route is visible on the far bank which is the edge of kafirs homeland , the Kafiristan.

Dommel Nisar remained a quite, isolated, lonely place where time seems to have stand still since it was constructed, it was awaken after the Russian invasion of Afghanistan and the thousands of Afghan refugees entering into Chitral through this one route as all others were desolated. These Afghans made mud villages along the banks where ever it was available, those were the days that world was in favour of them and the people of Chitral welcomed them with open heart after all they were brothers; mostly. In 1962 Pakistan had exchanged the territory with Afghanistan, gaining the General Ayub ridge where a post bears his name across a mile in Torkham and in return giving them the area in Dost Muhammad which is across Arandu. Thus with this act the few hundred odd families all of a sudden found themselves as part of another passport, currency and laws. As a convention these people all along the Durand Line are given

right to move freely across the border. At dusk Muhammad the situation is no different, there are 40 odd men of Arandu who daily go across the border to open their shops in Afghanistan by crossing over the bridge, reciprocally there are average 20 odd families visit Pakistan daily just for medical purpose.

After sunset the Fort's lone gate is closed and life begins inside the fort, the mosque is outside the fort and it is only the Isha prayers which keeps the gate open. The additional battery of mortars and guns have extended the fort southward with new mud boundary wall coming up, this all took place after the attack of August 2009 which was mainly, chiefly along Mirkani-Dommel Nisar-Arandu axis. Miscreants the Afghans came from the west across the river, they descended down from mountain after darkness making use of lapse of security atBridge which was kept open contrary to the age old convention of closing. Three posts were attacked physically and all others including the Dommel Nisar and Mirkhani Forts were put under fire attack to keep them down there by restricting the reinforcements and gaining time. On that deadly night 22 Chitral Scouts embraced shahadat with Sepoy Nasr Minallah standing alone in his post for well over thirty hours and thereby stalling the grand plan of the attackers. After this incident army moved in to plug the gaps and to act as a deterrent potent force, artillery battery ex 101 Mountain regiment commanded by Major Ahmed Nawaz was the first one to move in with their headquarters at Mirkani, having observers at Dommel Nisar and ahead. One of the Northern Light Infantry regiment{3} also moved in followed by 42 AK and 33 Baluch Regiment whose commanding

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officer along with general officer commanding 17 Division embraced shahadat in an IED blast on 17th September 2013.

Day starts with Fajr prayers and then slowly moved in , most of the strength is deployed on post thus remaining have to act as reserve and provide administration efforts. There is no fax machine and mail official comes through Mirkani which is collected at past ten hundred hours. The wireless communication works perfectly both for official and private talk. Water is in abundance due to the spring as river water is muddy in summer. Electricity is also provided through hydel and also from Shushi power house. Dry ration is collected from Drosh Fort and fresh ration is supplied by contractor.

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2130 hours. I had just ventured out and spotted the fort door ajar with no sentry visible this is dangerous. These small lapses of security can cost very dearly, i have fail to understand that how these fine men and fine officers can be so callous about the security. This dilemma is everywhere especially in corps like Chitral having an area so large that commandant is unable to keep an eye but it is not the commandants job either it is the wing commander's responsibility. In the morning when we came to Dommel Nisar and i mean myself, Major Ahmed Nawaz and two young captains, none of us was armed and that is a very bad message for the youngsters. There were gunmen in the rear but officers were not armed and none was carrying water. Anyway i have locked my room from inside but it is of no use in case of attack.

Back to Mirkhani. After a night stay at Dommel Nisar i was back to Mirkhani. In the morning i had the group pictures of

the wing taken . The wing also had made elaborate arrangements for the pictures, i have found these scouts to be picture happy. All weapons were laid out even the mortar shells were there. I later took more pictures of the Chitral Scouts mortar battery, the scouts were in track suits but i made it clear that only those pictures which are operational will be published so they happily change into uniform just for the pictures.

I walked out of the fort with one regimental police scout accompanying me. I enquired about the local population but he was almost blank. We walk and i notice the movement in the house across the river bank, there were few women carrying out house chores like running after the goats, children. On our way we after five minutes walk came across the village Dommel , it has one school in which the Chitral Scouts education staff also teaches on voluntarily basis. The same wooden structure is also used as mosque and as a madrassa. The teacher also joins us and soon he called the local teacher too. The Dommel Nissar literally means a resting place. The whole area is overwhelmingly Afghan in culture and even language here is Pashtu instead of Chitrali. People are adherent of Sunni sect and very conservative in outlook. However i noticed the women working in field. This valley is different from the rest of Chitral. In the madrassa there was a notice displaying in which all those who have missed the prayers were warned not to do so and they were fined too. The area is famous for its grapes. The school boys who are studying in higher classes have to walk almost three miles to attend at Lachi Gran and they were back now. These students after coming back from school first offer prayers and then go

home, have lunch comprising of a bread and few fruits, vegetables are rare here. Then they attend the religious teaching and then an hour of games comprising of football or cricket. Majority of them when they come back had to tend the sheep and other chores of home. The teacher also increased my knowledge by stating that the piquet of the fort high up on the ridge was a Hindu raja's fort in old days , he further stated that while constructing his house he came across buried items but nothing expensive in them.

At Mirkhani, I met Naik Nisar and later we both went to have a talk at the Tuck shop outside the fort. This shop was recently commissioned by Lt Col Tauqeer who has a knack for constructing and doing it within time. This shop is his idea and an excellent one. Presently it lacks wash room but it is on hand to construct two washrooms one for ladies and other for males. One really has to travel by road to comprehend the value of this shop. I recall when i was coming to Chitral few months ago with Major Kayani and his friends we were really looking for a place to rest and have a cup of tea. Crossing of Lowari takes its toll on every one.

28th September, Drosh.

Yesterday it was the **Bara Khana** of Lieutenant Colonel Naeem, he is going back to army after one year stay with No.3 Wing. He has served with them rather led them in Bajaur for six months and six months here at Drosh. On 27th September when I came back to Drosh from Mirkhani and had all my intention of going back to Peshawar but i stayed

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for this baara khana. It was decided on the spur of the moment.

Baara khana is a tradition in which the outgoing commander is given a farewell dinner by the troops, it is done by saving the ration especially the meat and then having a feast. In my days of army the standard and scale of ration in army was rather low as compared to the present scale moreover the ration scale of Frontier corps is much higher than army. The new wing commander Lt Col Burhan is from 42 AK Regiment which he has commanded and from there he has posted to Chitral Scouts; the regiment is also deployed around Drosh thus military band from the regiment was arranged which came and from noon started playing various tunes.

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Dress code for bara khana is usually white kameez shalwar with black waist coat and shoes. Wing Commanders from Dommel Nissar, Mirkhani were there Lt Col Sarfraz of No.6 Wing at Garm Chasma was also there so were two three staff officers, subedar majors of wings and the corps subedar major. They had come from Chitral {on official vehicles}. The ground was well lit and seating arrangements were made.

I met almost all, now the subedar majors know me and we had small talk about the history and their area. The food was good but it was not that rich as i had expected rather bit low and one reason which i ponder was that for baara khanna one has to plan few days in advance; it is also possible that this was the standard. Again referring to army fables; the good baara khanna is the one in which legs of lamb or goat are roasted; they were not here tonight.

Chitrali music after the dinner was good, artillery officers from Mirkhani also joined in rather bit late as Captain Tajdar narrated that they thought that dinner is in their honour thus they were late. Subedar Akhtar of Mirkhani enrich my knowledge about Chitrali Sitar by stating that it is made by three companies all based in his village Sonoghar. He also commented on the various tunes which were being played. Chitrali music is soft in nature and so is the dance which was being performed by the various Scouts at random. Dance is slow but it gathers momentum, each tune was of two or three minutes. Dancer had slow body movement and wiggling of body but nothing lewd and nothing very fast all in all soothing and relaxing but all this changed with an army soldier of 42 AK jumping in and to my opinion rather disturbed the scout's rhythm but it was part of game.

In the end the farewell speech of wing commander and giving of gifts by the wing and other wings, they all were carpets mostly hand woven; nothing to wing by the outgoing wing commander. Later a melee of dance in which all officers also joined in, the two bands the army and scouts small party playing together with no clear music but it was fun. In the end the wing commander was towed by ropes while he was sitting in the jeep being driven by the new wing commander and troops pulling the ropes. Captain Tajdar narrated that only last year in Kashmir one such vehicle toppled over the rocks while it was being towed . Classic Murphy Law.

A Convoluted History of Chitral.

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After almost a fortnight and with excessive studies, interviews, travelling and observing I have reached certain key notes about Chitral. The people as a thumb rule do not talk about their history and when they do talk it is nothing more than what is written about Chitral by the Chitralis which primarily revolves around the princes or royal history; something very similar to England.

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Primarily there are two distinct river namely the Yarkhun and TirschMir or Lotkow which confluence just a mile upstream at Chitral, the rivers which are joined by many small tributaries which all are fresh water glaciated water or spring, compartmentalises the state into varying valleys but mainly the north & south. Religiously people of Chitral have Kafir among them and there is no logic not to believe that majority of population at one time was Kafir. The upper Chitral is predominantly Ismaili by faith and lower Chitral is Sunni. Upper Chitral have influence of Tajikistan, Badkshan and Pamir where as the lower Chitral is under the influence of pathan culture or Kunar culture which creeps up stream through the Chitral river. Historically there were two major ruling dynasties the rais which were ruling Chitral from 1000 -1530 AD and Kator which through a coup d eta came into power in 1530 AD, it coincides with Mughul rise to power and kators as such are linked with the Mughuls. These two ruling classes have bitter and bloody history trail like all other princely houses all over India or for that matter in world.

Socially the society comprises of the ruling families known as adamzads, arbabzads come next in ladder followed by the fakir & maskin. This is the issue as no one will admit

that he is from lowest rug. Then there is religious factions and persecutions; as late as in 1926 when the Mehtar carried out an all out effort to convert the Ismailis living in upper Chitral into sunnism , it happened after his hajj. The persecution was stopped only after the intervention of British political officials.

The 3000 odd Kafir living on the southern bank of River Chitral are another enigma, they at one time between 1000-1300 AD were powerful rulers of Chitral although no unified command yet they have a history of standing up to the Mughuls and later to the Afghans, however in the end they were almost exterminated in 1895 but managed to hold on to a narrow strip of land in lower Chitral. Majority of these Kafir embraced Islam and are known as sheikhs in society. Their women still stroll the Chitral bazaar wearing colourful attire hardly anyone can point out a Kafir man as he wears no distinct dress item.

Headgear is very important as is seen in all along Durand Line, Chitralis wear white headgear made of Chitrali Patti, Swati also wears the same design and so does Gilgitis and even Mahsuds wear the same kind of headgear with minor design and wearing pattern. A Pathan seldom wears this headgear he has its own white skull cap in summer, Gilgiti cap is similar in cloth but it is smaller in circumference and it does not have the cloth hanging out from the edges as in case of Chitralis. There is only difference in cloth as far as the Swati is concerned and also the colour, Swati wears rather grey colour.

Tribes of Chitral Scouts-Races-Weapons & Culture.

Chitral socially is divided into former ruling, and military class known as Adamzads, the middle class is known as Yoft and Fakir & Maskin is self explanatory. Chitral does not have a social class associated with a specific profession as is common in Punjab, like barber, cobbler, tailor, mason, carpenter and so on. In Chitral people change their profession occasionally and frequently, there is no social taboo associated with any kind of work.. This baffles a new comer to the area, it has limitation as no artisan worth mention can be associated with Chitral, for instance presently there is no cobbler in Chitral District who can make a leather sole chappal ; some thing which is so common in Punjab. Same holds true for saddle items despite the fact that polo is played in Chitral still all leather equipment comes from Punjab. On the positive aspect, this social pattern allows all to flourish in life by adopting profession of their choice. Many of students earn their fees by working as barber in village shops. Ruling class too have a convoluted history, almost all rulers starting from Aman Ul Mulk in 1850 are Afghan in blood. The ruling class known as Adamzada takes origin from Sangin Ali in 15th Century AD, he had three sons namely Muhammad Beg, Riza and Muhammad Dast, presently they are divided into seven clans . Riza Khel consist of 150 families and scattered throughout Chitral. Muhammad Dastas descendents are very few and live in Maroi and Gokhir area. Muhammad Begas are the descendent from the eldest son and almost all the recent past history of Chitral revolves around this family. The family itself took a split with one branch known as Khushwaqt and

Barushas almost exclusively living & ruling in Mastuj and other branch known as Sangin Ali II living in Chitral, it is this family of Chitral which have Afghan Blood line and that was the major cause of civil war among Mastuj and Chitral in past. This ruling clan known as Katoras are descendent of Muhammad Beg{eldest son of Sangin Ali} and have three section, The Sangale, Katuras proper, and finally The Khanyas.

Chitral Scouts soldiers all recruited from Chitral and as such treated as one qaum , within this qaum scouts are more often referred from the village they belong. In other Frontier Corps corps it is other way around, a scout is known by his tribe. Chitral can be classified into twelve clans which have historically been treated as Chitralis. **Zondras** of Siyawushe tribe, they live between Booni-Zundramgram-Mastuj and in Ayun area. **Syeds** all are Maulis, **Ismailis** are followers of Agha Khan, **Aram Begas** of Mulkhaw, **Khoshas** of Torikhow they are descendent of Yamini who migrated from Kash in Badakshan. **Khushal Bedgas** of Owir, **Shighias** of Kuh, they live in Koghozi and surrounding villages. **Dashmanas** of Mulkhaw , their ancestors came from Khorasan with Sangin Ali. **Baikhas** of Torkhow, **Siranga Zondras** are descendent Somalek who ruled before 14th Century AD, they live between Booni and Mastuj. **Khushrawas** of Barenis are an old tribe. **Khojas** are followers of Agha Khan and occupy lower Terich valley where as **Majes** lives in upper Terich valley.

Non Chitrali Tribes include Tangiri or Dangkurk.

They live in south of Chitral in the valleys of Ishtar Pewari, comprising of almost 1.5% population of Chitral they speak a different dialect known as Phulwar which is known as Dungkurk in local terminology. They belong to the mountainous clans of Gilgit and surrounding areas and as such share the similar mountainous cultural similarities. Gujar. They are literally the cow, cattle, goat, lamb; herdsmen, they are nomadic in nature and move with their herds depending upon the weather. Mostly residing in Swat, Dir and Kohistan area, majority living in Shisi Koh area north east of Drosh, their language is similar to punjabi, they are quite clever in their dealings, mostly uneducated. Pathan. These are mostly living in south of Chitral, some of them are also in Mastuj area and in Chitral city as well. The trade is in their hand, they speak their own language and generally remain aloof from the natives. Tajiks live in Madaglasht, Wakhs who live in northern extreme of Chitral, Kafirs are also taken as non Chitrali tribe socially although they seem to be the oldest inhabitants.

Culture

In terms of weapons a sword is called a Khonghar, it is very thin at the edge and in old times it was always dipped

in poisonous water before the battle. Shield is known as Khaari, Bow & Arrow are called Dhoorwan – Weishu, Nairang is a battle dagger worn around the body. Dumpla was a firearm using cartridge and Dumpla por and Rupal are rather the basic forms of firearms. The weighing measurements are also different, Batti si 2 ½ kilogram, Kondak is ten kilogram, Beera is 20 kilogram, Wara is 60 kilograms. Aichamoot is smaller than an inch, Dasheet is smaller than a foot and Hoost is larger than a foot but smaller than two feet.

In terms of dress the Injigan is famous for woollen cloth, caps for male and female are both made here, female cap is colourful and a must item for the bride known as 'khoi suak'. The woollen floor mat is known as 'Pelsibick Koreek'. Chitrali months are related to the culture for instance February is known as Urian for the birds {duck} that arrive here, names of adys are as in Persian, Shaanba, Do shaanba ...etc.

Women

Culturally women enjoy a high esteem in the society, there are instances of women being appointed governor during the reign of Aman Ul Mulk, furthermore even Shuja ul Mulk was married to a widower. They follow own traditions in marriages etc, like most of Pathan tribes here also the groom has to pay for the marriage expenditures including the clothing of bride. There was a time when the Chitral was a hub of white flesh trade but it is no more there. Chitral is facing a dilemma of social values, the majority of men from

lower areas prefer to get married here , since 1995 more than 350 cases of marriage outside Chitral has been taken into the courts by the local organisation in which it was revealed that only 270 marriages have taken place within the family rest all were outside the family in which the groom had paid the amount and move away with the bride. The important thing to understand is that Chitrali women are beautiful, cultured , well mannered, obedient, naive, innocent and family oriented and as such are held in high respect as a potential wife and mother and this point is often misunderstood by non residents.

The very first girl's school was opened in Chitral in 1936 known as Anglo Vernacular high school.

Myth & Superstitions

Chitral is full of myths which mainly comprise of fairies , there are Muslim fairy and Kafir fairy, there is a deaf fairy and then there is Kahngi Fairy which is an ally of housewives against their enemy fairies{Kafir & Deaf fairies}. For males there is a 'Gor' a jin who is neither male nor female, the feet are turned way around with fire streaks coming from fingers. The 'Boona Jin' comes out at night, his power is in his cap, anyone who gets his cap becomes his master. There are no less than half a dozen fairies which are part of Chitral's cultural life.

In terms of superstitions the Chitralis are no better than any other people and centuries old superstitious are still in vogue. If any one comes across a fox while setting course

for a journey than it will be successful however if a shikari comes across a rabbit than he is doomed. If the right ear is getting warm than rest assure someone is talking good of you and opposite if the left ear starts getting warm. Presently there are two much talk about personalities in Chitral, one is a female, known as Parri Begum who is believed to know the palmistry and can recall the souls of dead ones. Other is a pir in the high mountainous of Mulkhow , who again has the power to mould the future; matrimonial affairs is his specialisation and his six wives are a living publicity of his craft, he charges 6000 rupees for a visit.

Polo & Music.

Polo in true sense is the identification of Chitral , it is played here in almost all village ‘maidan’ the way it was invented and was played millenniums ago; no rules. Polo took birth in Central Asia with the domestication of this fine specimen of animal, the horse . These mountainous breed was and is still regarded as the best in the world in terms of stamina and intelligence. Key to success of Aryan was their mastery and love for horse, they initiated the very first Blitzkrieg in the history almost 1000 BC and kept rolling by Mongols and Turks most famous being Mahmud of Ghazna, Chengiz Khan, Halugu Khan, Tamerlane and Babar of Fergana. Game itself originated as a thrill & fun which comes up naturally when Aryans felt the speed, excitement and competitiveness while galloping on the steppes. Mongols particularly Tamerlane was fond of playing it with the skulls

of the vanquished. Buzkashi is the only other game which can rival Polo fervor. It is another strange twist of history that both these games are played in traditional pattern {which is nothing other than living natural} only in Hindu Kush{Badakshan, Chitral & Gilgit}. Polo is not played in Badakshan and Buzkushi is unseen in Chitral.

During summer which is short but warm , at evening one comes across Polo players trotting through Shahi Bazar towards one of the three Polo Grounds in Chitral, same scene can be seen in almost all villages of upper Chitral. Grounds are uneven, barely wide and long enough in high mountainous altitude of Chitral to allow any kind of safety to the horses, players or spectators. It is like an arena, small few feet high stony walls with sheer falls, defiles, gushing water from gols, back ground of mountain, centuries old maple or walnut trees adding to the scenery. There is no restriction on number of players, game duration lasts for 45 minutes to one hour without any change or rest for horse or player. There is no protective headgear or clothing, you just sit on the horse and gallops after the ball, hit it as far as as you can{ that is if other team players allow you to come even near the ball}. Pushing the horse, blocking the shot, cutting the line is all fair. In fact Polo is the most Gentlemen game in true sense, the opponents test you but intention is never to hurt or harm the player or horse. On 14th September 1981 Subedar Sultan Ali Shah had a fatal blow during a polo match between Chitral Scouts and a local team, he took his last breath at 1330 hours on 15th September 1981.

Music is another important segment of local life and especially no Polo game is complete without the presence of two instruments the drum and flute. They are soft in nature and provides perfect ambience to the occasion. Spectators sitting on the walls practically feel the heat of horses, their eyes remained glue on the ball for their own safety. When a player scores a goal then he picks the ball and strikes back towards other end, it has its own glamour. The player taking the shot after the goal does it with his own signature tune 'Tampuq'. The musicians knows it and when the sound travels in air it lets the mother, sister, wife and other beloved ones who have not been able to witness the game to know that he has scored a goal. Surnai , Damama and Dhool are three main music instruments for dances, Sitar and duff are for vocal programme. Ponwar is the welcome tune for guests, Jangwar is military tune played while going for war. Bari Waziwar & Shahbaz are tunes to start a ceremony, Shustwar is played on marriages while Ghalwar is a call to all to gather for polo match , Alghaniwar is Pathan style dance tune while Dani is a highland style of dance music and in the end Suzi is played to mark the end of ceremonies.

Shandur annual Polo match between Chitral & Gilgit is a classic, at 12000 feet high plateau which connects and act as the natural, historical and administrative boundaries of these two rival riparian mountainous cultures The River Gilgit & River Chitral {Yarkhun}. It started in 1903 and oral history traces a love string behind it, one of the princesses condition of marriage was 'the one who wins at Shandur' . another oral tradition traces its back ground to ancient times when the village democracy resorted to Polo for arbitration

rather than the violence. { Chitral & Gilgit have one of the lowest crime rate in the region}. In one of the epic matches which natives still love to talk about was on 28th august 1966, final was played between the Chitral Scouts and Northern Scouts, it was won by the Gilgit team, who had earlier defeated the Chitral Scouts in the preliminary match as well ‘ Gilgitis were no doubt better than us in every department of the game and it is a fact that we have to learn a lot from them’^{xxxv}. In that year {1966} polo season galloped off on 12th October, Chitral Scouts entered two teams, first team was headed by commandant Lieutenant Colonel Shaukat Sultan which fought its way to finals but eventually lost to the all times winner Zagrazar, the deputy commissioner’s team comprising of natives. The other polo team of Chitral Scouts lost in opening match to Balach another local team. This was Lieutenant Colonel Shaukat Sultan’s alst polo tournament as he was posted back to army in November 1966 after completion of his tenure, ‘ He was our commandant, infact a very special commandant, but it is as an elder brother that we miss him and shall remember him most’^{xxxvi}. He was replaced with an equally special commandant, Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Sher Khan, Sitara I Jurat.

1986 Polo match at Shandur was historic , President of Pakistan General Zia Ul Haq graced the occasion and Chitral Scouts commandant Lieutenant Colonel Murad Nayyar was the man behind this. Since then it has become the most prestigious event in world Polo calendar. It is played between Chitral Polo Team and Gilgit Polo Team. At Shandur Polo is played in most natural manner, duration is 45 minutes without any break, player cannot change his pony, a pony has

to sustain the entire duration. If a player gets injured then other player can replace him but pony will not be change; on the other hand if pony himself becomes injured than the opponent team has to play with one less player. It is in fact a test of horse and rider both in stamina and endurance apart from intelligence.

Chitral is not famous for horses, they all come from Badakshan in past and now from Punjab.; thus it is logical to conclude that where as Polo originates from Persian speaking Aryans the Buzkashi belongs to Turk. Within Chitral , Polo is played in upper Chitral only which is more Persian oriented culture, in lower Chitral, it is rarely seen. Kafirs have no tradition of playing Polo and neither it is played in the former Kafir valleys. Game is alive in Chitral, it is not dying neither its future is in danger. It is the pride of Chitral, Chitral Scouts and natives are keeping it alive; it provides them much needed adrenalin in a non violent manner.

Language.

All Chitralis are not same their faces, colour of eyes are different and so are their customs and traditions, however the language and religion is the biggest binding and after it the Chitral Scouts bondage is the most powerful institution in the Chitral. Khowar is the language of Chitral River from snout till Mirkani in the south with varying dialect, in its pure form it is being spoken in the upper Chitral in Mulkhow and Torkhow area ; ironically it does not have any written characters thus Persian remained the official language since early days later replaced by Urdu and English. Khowar is like

Urdu because it is also a combination of Persian, Turkish and Sanskrit language. Till mid seventies a journal in Khowar language was monthly published by the Government of Pakistan to promote the language. In Lotkow, Madaglasht and Kalashgum the dialect is different. Persian is still spoken and understood by the aristocracy in the Madaglasht in the Shishikuh Valley, Yudgah is spoken in upper Lotkow Valley above Parabek, Dangarik or Palola is spoken in Ashret, Kalkatak , Beroi and Nastiwar or Gawarbati is the language of Arandu. These varieties of language when seen in the context of the Waziristan which has much more area but only two dialect reinforces the theory that Chitral has been abode of many races and cultures which with the passage of time adopted a working pattern rather amicably. The abundance of fresh water and green pastures all along the various streams provided a solid logic against the utter use of violence for the land as observe in the Waziristan.

Hunting & Fishing .

Chitral is famous for the hunting , fishing and bird shooting. It is a migratory station for the Siberian birds and as much are much awaited by all. The hunting has its own customs and traditions in chitral, men spent much money in the hunting season often falling nto debt as well. The main cost is in the construction of a hunting piquet at the river and other lakes . Hunter then sits inside it at early morning, float the decoys and then it is a matter of patience before cranes starts landing. In summer almost everyone carry a fishing

stick/rod and fish is also available in market. The protein requirement of natives is thus fulfilled through this activity. Big sport is highly restricted and permit is very expensive, snow leopards are quite common sight.

Lieutenant Colonel Murad Khan Nayer.

History of Chitral Scouts and Chitral itself will be incomplete without mentioning the name of Lieutenant Colonel Murad Khan Nayer. He remained commandant of Chitral Scouts for twelve long years from 1977-1989; he was the uncrowned Mehtar of Chitral. His legacy includes two fantastic, magnificent mosques, one at Drosh and more spectacular at Chitral. He inaugurated Shandur Polo tournament to present glamour {he himself was not a Polo player}. Murad was an old hand of Frontier Corps, he had served in Kurram Militia in 1967, as a staff officer in Frontier Corps at Balahisar before assuming the command of Chitral Scouts. He made Chitral Scouts a champion corps winning championship banner thrice and always a medal in annual sports competitions. He harnessed the natives in the Chitral during Russian occupation of Afghanistan; it is pure coincidence that both ended simultaneously. A poet of enjoyable words, patron of arts, music & craft in Chitral. He was among the closest friend of President General Zia Ul Haq; although Murad was much junior to him in service. It was in 1967 when both met for first time, Zia then a lieutenant colonel was moving with his family to Kurram for a brief stay and it was here that Murad became his host. Zia and his

family was much impressed with Murad's hospitality and sincerity. Legend goes that Murad prophesized to Zia that he had seen in his dream of him becoming the army chief ; Zia just laughed it out but then agreed to accepting whatever Murad wishes in case if he becomes an army chief. General Zia not only became army chief but also the President of Pakistan; he stood by his promise and kept on giving unprecedented extensions in service to Lieutenant Colonel Murad.

General Zia had his last breadth in an air crash in August 1988 and next year Lieutenant Colonel Murad committed suicide while still being the commandant of Chitral Scouts. He took his life in the mid night hours in his house, Murad was a bachelor; he left a note also highlighting that he is taking his life with his own will and none from Chitral Scouts should be held responsible for this act. As a last will he requested to be buried in Drosh. Presently he has attained a status of a saint among the natives who remembers his kindness and generosity towards the natives especially poor.

His marble grave is in one corner of the Drosh mosque which he constructed. The house he occupied for twelve years at Drosh has been demolished to make room for the Chitral Scouts School. People still believes that his ghost is living inside Drosh Killa and on full moon takes a round of killa.

Chitral Scouts and War against Militancy. 2001-2014.

Chapter VI

Chitral Scouts is actively participating in the ongoing operations against terrorism since last three years. Chitral Scouts has kept its flag high in all operational areas i.e. Swat, Bajaur, Spina Thana (Darra Adam Khel), Dir Maidan and Orakzai Agency. Chitral comparatively had remained safe from the flames of terrorism. On 12th July 2007 , Mortar battery of Chitral Scouts was inducted in Bajaur and two months later No.4 Wing and two companies of No.5 Wing move from Chitral to Fort Milward in Bara Valley undercommand mahsud scouts. These were the two initial deployments of Chitral Scouts as part of war against terror. In October 2007 No.3 wing alongwith one company each from No.4, 5 and No.2 Wings left Chitral for taking part in Operation Mountain Viper in Swat. At that time Chakdara Fort was under occupation of No.5 Wing Chitral Scouts. During Operation Mountain Viper , no less than eight post were being manned by the wing which included Landakai, Birikot, Birikot Top, Ghundai, Ghalagai, Gora Tai, Gamin Bridge and Churchill Post. Both wings of Chitral Scouts {No.3 Wing at Swat and No.5 Wing at Chakdara} performed exceptionally well. Balagram, Kanju, Kabal and Ayub Bridge are now part of Chitral Scouts history. The pattern of insurgency revolved around keeping the roads open and maintaining the morale of civilian population and own military through aggressive patrolling and show of force. Sepoy Mohsin Ali was injured at Kabal and havildar

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Buzurg Muhammad embraced shahadat at Kabal on 8th May 2008 when miscreants launched attack on their post while No.2 Wing was in the process of relieving No.3 Wing at Kabal.

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Eight scouts were injured on 16th September 2008 at Kabal, due to miscreants launched attack on Banda post, this post again came under attack on 27th October 2008. In November the very first suicide attack on Chitral Scouts was launched, on 6th November 2008 at 20150 hours a suicide vehicle blew itself at Ayub Bridge Post.

Operation Sirat Ul Mustaqeem started in Khyber Agency on 28th June 2008 and No.4 Wing participated in it where as one company of No.6 Wing was deployed at Bajaur. On the very first day of 2009, Naik Hamid Khan and Sepoy Rehmat Gul were abducted near Batagram, they were later shot dead by the miscreants.

It was in August 2011 when hell broke loose in lower Chitral when the physical attack was launched by the Afghan Bashgol. Chitral Scouts is organised into six wings, with a mountain artillery battery and mounted infantry as integral components. Overall command is with a colonel who acts as Commandant. Chitral Scouts was the first corps to have a colonel as commandant. Each wing is commanded by a lieutenant colonel, having four companies each commanded by a subedar. Although these companies should be commanded by regular officers but there is always a shortage of them. Furthermore each company comprise of four platoons each having three sections. Platoons are commanded by a havildar. Strength of a wing varies from 600-690 scouts.

These wings rotate after three-four years among the various stations in Chitral like Drosh, Mirkhani, Dommel Nisar, Mastuj, Chitral and Garam Chashma. They manned posts which are outlying like Broghul Pass, practically they have posts on every pass and in every valley. Task of post vary for instance the posts along Drosh-Mirkhani-Dommel Nisar and Arandu have more concentration towards anti-smuggling role where as in Broghul and Shah Salim Pass they are more like listening post. These are in fact the symbol of state. These posts provide search and rescue in winter, disseminate education & medical to locals; overall peace and tranquillity seldom required any scout action in the area.

The pattern and conduct of war is unconventional, miscreants are small in number and mostly based in Waziristan, from there it slowly and gradually started affecting adjoining areas. These miscreants are not under any uniform command rather it is the last two hundred years of history being repeated again. Dir, Swat, Buner were the strongholds of Ahmed Shah Barelvi's followers {1825-1860} and they had nothing to do with the Wazirs. Violence in Kurram and Orakzai Agency {Orakzai Agency was carved out of Kurram in 1974} is mainly around sectarianism. Bajaur was also once part of Khyber Agency and violence has its roots in Afghanistan. But by and large the violence is restricted to Pashtu speaking areas and even more prominently in tribal agencies. Maulana Fazalullah of Swat is the one calling the shots in the area.

Violence within Chitral has always been restricted to the Arandu-Drosh axis with the exception of 1926 when

Lotkow and upper Chitral were targeted by the Mehtar on religious grounds. Mostly it is the Afghan issue which is the root cause, the issue again is not at national or international level rather it is the local geography & history which is the firewood of the violence. 18th Century campaigns for conquest of land or the crown or even that of egos have almost exterminated in last fifty odd years. The Russian invasion of Afghanistan in 1977 was a big test but even then Chitral was a normal district. Russian used to bomb Arandu and Drosh but no physical attack was launched either by them or the Afghans or the Bashgol on their behalf.

In last twenty years the sectarianism has emerged as the biggest threat to the tranquillity of millenniums in Chitral. Sunni, Shia & Ismailis have been living here in such harmony which only recently was matched only by Gilgit but peace has gone from areas east of Chitral. Similarly not long ago , only few years ago the foreigners were roaming in the bazaars of Chitral, lone woman travelling at night with porters, scholars coming from around the world to explore the Kalash Valley; all this including the mega projects like Lowari tunnel and Goleen Hydrel power project are now under threat of miscreants attacks.

Chitral Scouts Artillery Battery, mortar battery, signal platoon, military platoons have all been supporting the operations against the militancy. It is the beauty of Chitral Scouts that despite all the ongoing operations the life still maintains its normal pace. Schools have been upgraded, houses for shaheed have been constructed, constructing parks for children, conducting the annual Polo at Shandur{it was not

held in 2013 }, sports tournament, promotions of scouts, training for recruits, dine out of officers and subedars, expansion, extension, preservation of forts and old heritage. Free medical camps for the local and providing protection to all the major projects in Chitral. Protection, promotion and nurturing of Kalash people & culture is also part of Chitral Scouts .

Athanasius of Bambouret . September 2009.

Kafirs of Kalash claims to be descendent of Greeks and it is very much possible also because Alexander The Great after his retreat had divided the India into two of his lieutenants who remained in power for another three hundred years . The way to Oxus from Indus or vice versa has to pass through the Kafiristan; not necessarily the Chitral River. Thus Greeks or Hellias as they call themselves now have developed a cultural heritage with them , it serves both as Greeks are also looking for something to revive its old glorious history and Kafirs looking for more attention. Greeks have developed the museum, water supply in the Bhumbirit which is the largest of Kafir village, community toilets and few other minor things. Mr Lerounid Athanasius was one such person who was living in the village since 2002. On 7/8 September 2009 at midnight, two men overpowered the Head Constable Zafar who was there as part of security to Athanasius; heading four men. It is worth mentioning that not before these,had ever any policeman stayed a night here because of the crime situation. They at times would close the police station at

sunset, hand over the keys to the local headman and then come back in the morning after. Zafar died when he hit the ground, other two policemen were injured and Mr Athanasius was taken away.

Chitral Scouts platoon under the command of Major Naseeb arrived at first light , all bridges and tracks leading to Afghanistan were sealed, border police was alerted and local jirga was called and addressed by Major Naseeb. Residents of Bhumbirit, Ayun, Urtsun & Birir serving in Chitral Scouts were sent on leave to gather the information from the villages..

The first lead came from Noor Muhammad a local who disclosed that he had provided mules for some Afghans

‘ I was going from my village Otak Banda to grazing ground at Waler Banda with my mules when I encountered a dozen Afghans along with a person wearing a chaddar moving under their protection they were climbing up, the man with chaddar was walking with a stick other were carrying weapons, one an told me rather ordered that he is their officer pointing towards the man wearing chaddar and I should take him upon on my mule ,I refused and was taken along on gun point....after some time my animal also got tired and I was ordered to carry the officer on body which I did..later I really had to touch their feet to let me go which they did. It was Ramadan and they were eating and offered me the same but I declined. I had talk with them and asked about the person , they narrated that they have abducted it from Bhumbirit and in the process had killed one policeman also, they had

wrapped the bombs around their body and i think even the bag which they were carrying was full of bombs’.

One cannot ascertain the truth of this but it was certain that they adopted the Parapit Pass route to reach Patti Gol. Commandant Colonel Rizwan Rafi { former special services group} visited the area and held the jirga and was of the opinion that local residents of Bhumbirit & Shekhandeh are involved{it proved correct later}. The parties of local were sent to Nuristan on 10th September comprising of local jirga members for release of Athanasius , one left on vehicle via Arandu-Birkot route the other two on foot via Zingoor Pass.

On 2nd October 2010, the jirga came back with letters from Athanasius, which was delivered to the Chitral Scouts in which Athanasius wrote ‘ I am fine here until today..Taliban demands 20,000 US\$ and freedom of their prisoners’. Two of the messengers sent to the local Taliban leader had an unfortunate accident as one was killed when NATO aircraft bombed the area and other was seriously injured.

Mr Athanasius was later released by the Taliban after Greek Embassy agreed to pay the ransom. Prisoners were not released, he was handed over to Chitral Scouts.

Zhangshall Abduction. On 28th November 2010, eight men were abducted by the Afghans while they were cutting woods , they abducted eight woodcutters and left one with the message that Zhangshall belongs to them and no wood cutting is allowed . Later all the wood cutters were released who narrated that they were taken into Gawardesh in

Afghanistan where the **abductees** simply got tired of feeding them and thus left them one by one. The woodcutters were hired by the locals for wood cutting and had come to the area on vehicles. Lower Chitral is famous for the wood thus a 'wood mafia' has emerged. This small incident highlights the intriguing face of the conflict. Everything which happens does not necessarily have roots to extremism.

Ursun Post - 2nd May 2011.

On the night of 1 May 2011 the miscreants belonging to the Swat chapter attacked the post which was held by 30 Scouts of Chitral at 0200 hours, miscreants were in strength of 20-30 who had infiltrated through the Paith Zom Pass and Gambir Gri Pass to cross the frontier and then used Banjal to reach the post. The initial plan of the miscreants was to attack silently but they were discovered by the alert sentry and that resulted in exchange of heavy fire. Five rockets fired by them landed inside the post, this fire duel continued for another three hours before the miscreants were forced to flee. The miscreants while fleeing attacked one post of border police and took away eight SMGs along with three policemen of border police as hostage. Miscreants were believed to be part of Faizullah Group^{xxxvii}.

Darashot- The Longest Day.

On 27th August 2011, the Afghan miscreants attack seven different posts of Chitral Scouts in Arandu – Mirkani area spread over 32 Kilometres, the crow distance between

them is 22 kilometres; soon after Fajr prayers. It was the first such attack of this magnitude since 1919 and when seen in present context of war against militancy this was the dragging of Chitral into the Durand Line affairs from which it has been able to keep a safe distance since 1895.

The attack lasted till noon, post which came under the attack were Ursoon, Mirkani, Dommel Nisar & Langurbat with heavy fire, mortars, rocket propelled grenade launchers , all which is usual in the tribal attacks on the posts all along the front and physical attack was launched upon the Gudigar, Darashot and Kauti. It is the pattern of the Taliban in which the attack is launched on a group of posts , keeping some under the fire and attacking one particular physically. It creates delaying action upon the defender especially at night in mountainous terrain with very poor communication tracks .Chitral Scouts stood out the test and fought bravely holding the posts intact especially at Darashot.

People living in the area especially at Nuristan, Shekhandeh, Bhumbirit Rumbur, Ursoon, Ginjirate Kuh, Arandu, Chitral are relatives to each other since centuries and it they have been travelling almost daily to meet each other and carry out the chores of centuries old rituals of trade through frequented and unfrequented routes^{xxxviii}. The district administration had established the contacts with the people living in Nuristan for marinating peace in the area and not allowing the Taliban or hard core Islamic militants in the area; so far it had worked for almost eleven years a remarkable achievement when seen in the context of overall devastation of social fibre in the frontier and other regions of Pakistan.

Miscreants had the concentration area at Gawardesh from where they crossed into the Chitral boundaries through Pathkun Bro, Paitazom, Kauti Gol, Gambiri Gri and Chulu Gol. They were a mixture of Afghani and Nuristani men wearing stolen NATO uniform and definitely supported by the Afghan National Army personnel as one of the dead body later revealed. It is highlighted that in May same year five posts of Afghans were wiped out by the miscreants which Afghan alleged to be based in Pakistan. The warning about the impending attacks was received almost a month ago with rumours coming from the lips of the travellers and the centuries old natives' way of information. What was surprising, was the magnitude as almost seven posts were hit simultaneously. The quick reaction forces were made ready at nodal points and wings were warned to keep a high alert and this in the end saved the day. The four worst hit posts were Darashot, Gudibar, Kauti & Langurbat.

At Darashot thirteen individuals of the post including post commander embraced shahadat, yet they did not surrendered it , Sepoy Nasir manned the machine gun till 1300 hours when the relief force came on the post. Attack was led by the Ghazwan and Zubair both local miscreant commanders with Zubair getting injured also.; all in all 32 Taliban were killed , the remaining while fleeing burnt the hanging bridge on River Chitral thus practically bringing the chase to an end. They had looted the weapons as well which they took it back via Langurbat, Arandu, Khur and Dab.

Sepoy Nasir Min Ullah- Last Man Standing

On 27th August which was 27 of Ramadan also, Sepoy Nasir after taking his sehray along with six other scouts was reciting the Holy Koran. No joy can match than reciting the greatness, favour, love of our creator, sitting at a small plateau overlooking the calm, green valley with River Chitral flowing with all the glaciated water, It was dawn with cool air blowing lightly and gently; Ramadan was coming to an end in another two days thus festivity of Eid was already in air and in hearts of scouts. Many scouts had gone on Eid leave yesterday thus bringing the manning level at certain posts to unauthorised level.

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Darashot is a small hamlet on the western bank of River Chitral, a small wooden hanging bridge allows the fifty odd inhabitants to cross over . On the other hand it allows the tribes, men, scouts to cross over and get into Afghanistan , area is thickly vegetated with olive trees, boulders, stones, defiles with odd patches of level field. Darashot was a post a small post and not a small piquet , it was a check point established at the eastern end of bridge, it was nothing more than a room with two tents pitched alongside having ammunition, living , cooking, for twenty scouts in them, commanded by Subedar Niat Ghazi . The main aim was to keep the wooden hanging bridges under observation, checking everyone physically who crosses it and at dusk to close it. A procedure being followed since 1901 in the area when ever there was any threat from Afghans. Historically River Chitral bifurcates the Hindu raj like a peach line. Area on west was

Kafiristan , extending from Arandu all along the west bank , reaching a conical omega bend at Nagur & Mirkhani, and encompassing Ayun, very few crossing points not more than a dozen are available .

Darashot was a complex of two posts, one which was at the bridge and other across the narrow track and higher on the plateau; in a small stone room which was built by the herdsman for self and animals protection. There were six scouts manning this out post, they had no line communication with the post down below. They daily had to go down to fetch the fresh ration or cooked food from the main post. Water was another issue, drinking water was also fetched from down below. Two sentries would give the duty at one time, but it was nothing alarming. There was one machine gun, one rocket launcher with six rounds, and four rifles at the post, it was a section strength weapons and ammunition.

‘ I heard a shot and I inquired from my comrade who was standing and looking at the vast, dimly lit frontier with weapon in his hand, I got up and walked towards him , that is when the first major burst of fire opened up, it included machine gun, with rocket launcher noise overpowering all other; they had hit the ammunition tent and now the crackling of rifle fire. It all took two minutes, now all of my comrades were out , running with the weapons and occupying the positions. None of us was sure as to what had actually happened and where should we fire in retaliation ’.^{xxxix}

Machine gun could not fire down below because of ‘line of fire’ which created a dead zone. In another few minutes situation became clear, our post down below was hit

with rockets and small arms fire, enemy had established fire base on the western bank and now they were running across the bridge. Sepoy Nasir narrates

‘ I fired a rocket at the bridge to destroy it thus blocking the invasion but I missed it by few feet. Within seconds they were on our bank, now fire started coming on our locality too. There was no pause everything was happening in quick time ’

Apparently miscreants initially had very little or no information about the post at higher ground, it had affected their pla,; they now ascended up and engaged the post. By 0710 hours two scouts had embraced shahadat at the Darashot Post No.2 and almost all were wiped out at the main post down below. By 0745 hours the battle was going on at the higher post, miscreants apparently had achieved their aim but now wanted to wipe out the complex completely. One reason was that they had suffered casualties due to the fire coming from Nasir's post.

‘ In another hour I was the only one left alone at the post, around me were the dead bodies lying of my five comrades, I lost all sense of proportion, I became full of rage, I knew sooner or later a bullet is going to end my life like they taken away the lives of these five scouts. I was firing from different positions with different weapons which were lying around. I gradually started taking the dead bodies inside the room, I did not want them to be beheaded. ’

Sepoy Nasir took the position inside the hut and relied the fire, soon two rockets acme and hit his bunker, room was

full of smoke and nothing was visible, two Taliban came rushing in following the rocket burst, Nasir saw just a silhouette and fired back, it hit the Taliban in head and he died instantly. Now the battle took another dimension, Taliban were now eager and desperate to get the dead body back and Nasir was holding the post single handed. Duel continued for another hour, and then Taliban offered him safe passage if he allows them to take the dead body, Nasir fired a burst in reply. Taliban made another attempt to enter, destroy the hut but failed, by mid day Nasir was left with only seven bullets of rifle. At this point Taliban vacated the post and the area as rescue was approaching from Mirkhani. Nasir was ignorant about all this and when he heard the voices of men asking him to come out he refused and it was only when his own wing mate came and he recognised their voice did he come out.

Sepoy Nasir was promoted and then sent on United Nations Peace Corps in Sierra Leone. He have one more brother who is also serving in Chitral Scouts.

Orakzai Agency. A company strength ex Chitral Scouts was sent to Orakzai Agency in May 2010 for “ Operation Khawa Bade Sham”. The company performed exceptionally well and repulsed a number of attacks of the miscreants inflicting heavy casualties to them while defending ‘Top’ in Daburi. On night 21/22 June 2010, the company repulsed the major miscreants attack causing them 43 dead and 56 injured. Own losses were four shaheed (including two from Punjab Regiment) and sixteen injured.

History of Chitral Scouts Wings.

The basic organization of a fighting unit in Chitral Scouts is a wing which is equivalent to a light infantry battalion commanded by a lieutenant colonel. It has a strength of 640 men, organized into four companies each company having three platoon and each platoon having three sections, ten men makes one section. Each wing has its own headquarters commanded by a lieutenant colonel, subedar major is the senior most officer from junior commissioned officers. Each wing is mobile, lightly equipped, armed with light integral weapons and transport. Each wing has its own colour which is depicted on the shoulder titles and cap patch. Wings rotate among the forts of Chitral for a stay of two years in each. Inter posting among the wings for the scouts can take place only with the permission of commandant; usually a scout spent all his service in one wing

1 Wing: Senior most wing of Chitral Scouts, it was known as No.13 Wing and in 1990 was reverted to its old and present designation. Veteran of 1919 and Kashmir Wars. In June 1999 it entered the operational area in Kargil. Since 2000, the wing was deployed in Dir Maidan operation where it was placed under command Dir Scouts since September 2009.

2 Wing

It was an integral part of Chitral Scouts, in 1989 its designation was changed from No.14 Wing to No.2 Wing. It has served at Arandu, Warsak, Mirkani, Drosh and Chakdara. Wing has also served at FCNA, {Chilas 1993, Piun, September 1994, Hamzagond May 1999 and Piun June 2002}. In June 2007 No.2 Wing replaced No.3 Wing at Swat, headquarters were established at Kabal. Nasr performed duties with headquarters and later another five months at a post at Sarsanai. From here the scouts moves to Tutain Banda with a Baluch Regiment, the post was almost attacked daily by the snipers which took the life of Lance Naik Qadir Khan and seriously wounded Sepoy Tahir Shah. Apart from snipers the post was subject to suicide attack as well. Post commander Subedar Muhammad Daud and Naib Subedar Shehr Gulab displayed extra ordinary display of leadership and kept the morale high. Another volatile post was at Ayub Bridge , it was attacked by an explosive laden suicide vehicle which caused shahadat of Sepoys Wali khan, Haji Rehmat and Imtiaz with further ten more scouts getting wounded. Later the wing was move to Bajaur. On 7th January 2008 seven persons of the wing deployed at Ziarat Post died when they all acme under an avalanche.

In October 2010, the wing moves back to Mirkhani. (Chitral).

3 Wing: No.3 wing was raised on 1st October 1986 and re-designated as No.3 Wing in 1989. Wing has served under FCNA in August 1991-1992, May 2000- June 2001; from where it was rushed to Kitkot in Bajaur . during the Pakistan-India escalation in 2001, the Wing remained deployed t Baddomallhi in Punjab for over three months. Earthquake relief operation in 2005 was actively participated by the wing at Shangla, Ghari Hhabib Ullah and Manshehra. 3 Wing was ordered to move to Swat on a very short notice in September 2007. Initially wing was deployed in Mingora and surroundings. Later wing was deployed within area of responsibility of three army infantry brigades while wing headquarters was established at Kabal. Security of two main bridges (Ayub and Shamoza Bridge} was the responsibility of wing. Besides number of cordon and search operations, one suicidal vehicle was also identified and destroyed with bombers on 18 December 2007. The wing is in Bajaur Agency operation under command Bajaur Scouts since Oct 2010.

4 Wing: The wing was raised in 1986 as No.16 Wing and later re-designated to present in 1989. In 1992 the wing was placed under command FCNA for two years where it served at Siari, Olding and Hamzigund sectors. A year of internal security at Gilgit in 1998 and another at Bajaur in 1999 before taking over the Mirkani Fort from No.5 Wing in April 2001. In May 2003 the Wing again move into FCNA for a year. Wing has been in Milward (Khyber Agency) and performed operational duties in a very befitting manner from September 2007 – October 2009. Wing also took part in the bloody battle of Inayat Qilla in Bajour , February 2009.

5 Wing: The wing performed their duties in Swat and Dir Maidan Operation very well. It spent better half of 2001 in FCNA again moved into FCNA in August 2004. In 2008 Wing was deployed at Chakdara however its two companies were deployed at Shakas Fort in Bara Valley. This wing started advance on 26 April 2009 from Timergara and cleared area up to Lal Qila, heavy exchange of fire took place with miscreants and eight scouts including one junior commissioned officer embraced shahadat on same day. Incident took place at Hayasarai {Lower dir} on 26th April 2009. Wing despite the heavy casualties stood on its ground. In another incident near Kaladak on 1st May 2009, an IED caused four fatal casualties. Kalapni Post also took its toll when two scouts embraced shahadat on 26th May 2009. Another scout of the wing serving with Special operation Group {SOG} Naik Hakim embraced shahadat near Rustam on 4th June 2009. Before coming to Drosh in 2013, wing had served at Chakdara and Bajaur..

6 Wing 6 Wing was raised on 1st September 1989 at Drosh with Major Afzal as the first wing commander. They were stationed at Chakdara before taking part in Bara operation{1990} followed by Malakand Opeartion {1991}. It served in FCNA from August 1997 – September 1998.and had another tour of duty in the asme operational area in June 2006. After two years of stay at Mastuj it was inducted in Dara adam Khael in 2009 and remained actively deployed till May 2012.

Chitral

September 5th 2013- Major Langlands School .

I am back to Chitral Scouts and Chitral once again; this time the circumstances are different, I came here primarily because I got a text from Carey Schoffield who is the principal of Major Langland School at Chitral and I had met her once in the last visit and quite impressed with her efforts , academic credentials{ Oxford & Cambridge} and above all her personality she is in mid fifties but quite attractive and I think she thinks and acts like a Victorian era lady but it suits her. To my mind she fulfils the empty and void of Frontier where so far no lady has made her marks in a more dignified manner

Any way I got from the Landi Kotal with the commandant Khyber Rifles and then got hold of a taxi {fare 9500rupees} but for a noble cause it is worth it. Driver an Afghan Sameen , well by dinner time we were at the Chitral

Mess passing through the Malakand and crossed Lowari Top , weather was good and road also good. Security on road is appreciable. I remember meeting two havildar of 31 Baluch at the base of Lowari, and I am motivated by his words ‘ that our forefathers sacrificed their lives so I can be free today , now it is my turn’. The excitement of coming day was intense , I was constantly sending the messages to Carey informing about my location , she invited me for breakfast next day. I made a commitment with the driver to pick me up next day at 0630 hours , but neither he came nor the waiter brought my clothes from ironing, in the end I got the clothes and got hold of a new taxi and managed to reach the Hindukush heights by 0720 , five minutes late.

In the school it was opposite to my expectations but good, I had to give a five minute talk to the school in the assembly , I did by getting on to the flag post and speaking in loud but powerful voice, telling the boys how important freedom is , why we are celebrating defence day, the nobility of the profession of soldiering and so on , later I sang the national anthem with them and then realized that these boys are in fact keeping words with me and very few know the national anthem {same as in our school days}. Then the day was spent with the teachers, giving talks to three classes one by one, tea with school staff and another talk with Carey mostly about Alvi’s death circumstances. I drove with her to the hotel and realized that she wants me to go back without having lunch, but I just wanted to say hello to Major Siraj . I realized that probably Carey did not want me to meet the Siraj , may be it is my own mind but I could feel something in the air. I did not had the breakfast so when I was invited by

Carey for lunch I accepted it, another person Mr Arif Habib also joined in he had arrived just today{5th September} and seems to be old acquaints of Carey because she had embraced him although only customarily but she did and she did not did that with me. Anyway lunch was ok , I don't like the food in Chitral after the food of Khyber. Moreover I have noticed that these Chitralis are less hospitable than the Khyberis. I just talk about history and realized that Carey has very little knowledge about it , her field is English anthology { I have made a note to ask what is it}. But by and large Carey is a respectful person and I admire her being here in Chitral , I have always considered her since I have met her to be a Victorian era romantic mem sahibha. Her transport dropped me at the Chitral Mess. I am conscious of petrol prices and as such don't like being dropped or picked by Carey's vehicle but irony is that I can go there at hotel in a taxi{fare rupees 800} but there is no such thing to come back thus by force I have to accept it.

Friday

Well the actual defence day is today and I managed to reach the Chitral Scouts fort in their vehicle although I missed the vehicle taking the adjutant Major Kazmi, it was nice to see him, commandant is new but he had gone to Mirkhani for reconnaissance and conference. Chitral Scouts look good in their headgear of local cap with plume. I sat in adjutant office and same mental frustration which seems to be the hall mark of the Chitral Scouts,' sir commandant is away and when he will come only then we can extend help in history data' nothing wrong with this sentence but I know the

background so I just sat quietly hearing what all is going around. Almost all officers were sitting there Captain Nazar of 148 AD he is from Gilgit, Captain Hamdan is from Guides he has been promoted since our last meeting and a real good officer, the doctor the DDMS. Cup of tea and I was on listening watch, constant telephone rings, constant scouts or subedars marching in , television on mute, mobile .

The issue seems to be the threat of miscreants from across the border , an interception has been made on their communication network along with source report which is the cause of ripple, then a Moulvi has made a speech in mosque calling for elimination of Ismailis from Chitral and he has been called by police, the scouts want him to be put behind bars but police says that there is no such law for this. I recall even in Chaklala garrison last year the Moulvi in the mosque called for action against the shias but nothing was done against him, any action and that Moulvi will become a n hero overnight. The army {17 division} is in charge of the district but the problem is that for all practical purpose the district is settled and thee is no imposition of any regulations which states that it is under the army thus a great mass of confusion is in the air. There was a small gathering of college boys in front of the deputy commissioner's office protesting for lack of water and electricity in the college, that is the right of the boys and this is what they or every one does in this age but orders going out from the adjutant office was to disperse them immediately before the army headquarters start interfering in it. The two men walked in one was SSP of the city{investigation} and he wanted one of his relative to be discharged from service and adjutant agreed to put up the case

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to the commandant on his arrival on Monday but warned the individual that he will have to spend few days in scouts jail as well on which the individual agreed.

I gave my camera to the photographer to take pictures, the Bara Khana was at 1230 hours and I was wondering whether I will be allowed or invited in it, with every minute my opinion about the Chitral Scouts was getting worse and worse, it seems that clerks here are very powerful and bit arrogant as well. Well then another message regarding the perceived movement of the miscreants, a lieutenant colonel of military intelligence was also there it was his second day he is from 31 Punjab , a good man, he was also sitting in the office, the news was that some Wazir and Nazir are planning to carry out an attack on the Pakistani post close to Arandu, the weapons have been seen and messages on air confirm it also. Now the Taliban if I can use the word are intelligent enough and at times just by sending false messages they can create a false ripple in the security organizations and unfortunately then all focus gets onto the position mentioned by Taliban in communication and very conveniently the Taliban strike at other place, in my opinion the Ismaili are the target and they live in upper Chitral so let's see what happens. Adjutant then announced to the Subedar Barkat that officers are too committed so they cannot attend the bara khana and therefore their food should be sent to the officers' table. I requested adjutant to attend the bara khana as it will allow me to have interaction with scouts ; adjutant had no excuse but to allow me .

I was taken by the Subedar Barkat, the tent/qannat was pitched in the western part of the fort, it was still in progress so the BHM took me on around of the area, we went to the JCO's Mess and I had a visit inside, not in a good state , it seems that no one has taken meal here in months or years, same as in Khyber. I met the education JCO who is a n educated person wearing pant/shirt and tie , he has written two books one regarding the women education in Chitral other a novel, I like him he is also the principal of Chitral public school . He mentioned about one scout who is writing the history of Chitral Scout I was almost immediately keen to meet him but he said he will find it. Bara Khana was an experience and all my apprehensions about Chitral Scouts turned out to be true. No spoons no glasses , a rush on food like Punjabi village wedding scene, nothing militarily about it , reason absence of officers and lack of meat in daily diet; anyway I was genuinely upset with the behaviour.

Back to the office area met the quarter master who asked me whether I am still here since my first visit or have I come again , a good and intelligent question , I remained quiet. Food inside the tea bar was fantastic, same food as in troops table but here it was in abundance and in a manner that it looked nice, I declined to eat as I had taken meal with troops but in my heart of heart I did not liked this gesture of officers to have food separately even on this day, now the jig saw pieces of Chitral Scouts puzzle are getting into places. The adjutant announced that a book has arrived just now which is on Chitral Scouts history, it is the same book which the education JCO was mentioning, I was really excited and it was thee in Urdu and a short glance told me it is nothing new

from the past data yet two-three incidents are new. Chitral Scouts seems to be having a history of doing mutiny, they did it in 1973 when they were told that other qaums will also be joining the Chitral scouts, they were at Drosh Qila then , Lieutenant Colonel Afzal was the commandant the one who wrote a small pamphlet on Chitral as well, the scouts led by the subedar major then marched from Drosh, occupied Chitral fort and watered the airfield and helipad {polo ground} IGFC Brigadier Naseerullah Babar came from Peshawar and had to stand on the helicopter for negotiations with the scouts. The strategic importance of Chitral with hostile Afghanistan was too immense to take this affair lightly , at the end the scouts won it they signed an agreement with the IGFC with subedar major and the ruling prince as witness under which no other qaum is allowed to serve in Chitral Scouts,' amazing feat.

Next mutiny took place in mid nineties when again the Chitral contingent which was part of a FC Week developed a rift with the wing commander and in the end the contingent was called back to Drosh and court of inquiry conducted and IGFC Major General Ghazi ud Din Rana later gave punishment to over 64 scouts, ranging from seven days to 28 days RI, reduction of ranks, and dismissal from service of the subedar majors. No such steps were taken in 1973. The dismissed subedars later served terms in civil jail and few years later were given the old ranks pension. Now these are rare scenes and unprecedented in nature. It only highlights how important is the subedar major and how vital it is for the officer to keep an eye on the pulse of the things, both mutinies reminds me of Gilgit Rebellion of 1947, almost a replica. In the evening I saw the games of Chitral Scouts and it was only

on sports field that one feels good about them. Riding of two horses, Chitral Scouts have horses but no riding school. Cricket and football, people just watching and relaxing, looks very good. I developed bit of respect for them now, got Chitral scouts badges from canteen. On my way back I wanted to get down in the city to buy ink pot but adjutant did not allow me to go walking and made sure the vehicle takes me to bazaar and brings back to mess, a kind gesture. In the bazaar no ink pot, no shop was open due to Friday. Another good aspect is the Pakistan's recovery at Harare in the first test where Younis scored double hundred and saved Pakistan from a defeat.

Later I sent an text to Carey and have yet to receive the answer back , probably another miss text from me. Let's see. I had a good conversation with Lance Naik Nazir the library in charge , he has a master degree in islmayiat and is currently doing bachelor of education, I remember how he traced the missing library books , I like him. He gave me some appears and promised to write more.

Tuesday 10th September 2013, Chitral.

It is 1930 hours and I am sitting in the library which is one of the best among all the Frontier Corps libraries, I cannot go on without mentioning the Lance Naik Nazir of education corps, a good man and very hospitable he belongs to Sanobar in upper Chitral , Mastuj area, I am going to his village tomorrow to interview an old war veteran of 1948 Kashmir War, initially the programme was today but there are two

jeeps which leaves for his village and both had gone to Dir with apples. Thus I will take the jeep for Buni which is the junction of Yarkhun and another river.

In the morning I had the Chitrali shawl which are made here in the scouts own handloom , they are different for male and females , difference mainly in colour, male is brown or khaki and much larger in size, ladies is bit short in length and colours are generally more dark, like red or black. I was excited about them and later the works havildar brought the tailor also who took my measurement and let's see what he makes in the end.

Morning are very pleasant here, chirping of birds, the music of water flowing over the stones, the breeze passing through maple trees and in between all of a sudden the calling voice of peacock, the panic stricken voices of Chinese hen, I have always seen them in pair and always worried like oriental wives. I was given a lead by the havildar regarding the chappal makers by the name of Dardon Khan who had a shop at Drosh as well and here he is located in Ataleeq bazaar.

I walked to the bazaar , Tirich Mir was visible toady but partially, weather hot but I enjoyed the walk , I had the white Chitrali cap on me and it helps in breaking the ice with natives and I found myself walking as I am walking in any where else in world. I passed by the old bags shop , my own bag given for manufacture are not yet ready in Peshawar thus I am looking for a hand bag, I found one antique looking bag and I told him to keep it for me. The chappal maker shop was an hoax as there were ordinary looking chapapls, the owner not present and someone sitting who was absolutely blank

about this what I gathered from him was that there are no chappal makers in Chitral. Next target was to find a map of Chitral from Faiz Book store. I took the hidden path behind the main bazaar , passing through village and emerging from the city end, they are in process of erecting and constructing a new bridge over the stream. There seems to be a crowd present all the time on bridge watching this feat. I had to ask many shops regarding the map before I was able to hit the Faiz Book store but he did not had the map. On my way back I stopped at a dry fruit shop and bought the pea nuts. Wall nuts are very popular here but they will be solid in another two weeks. The major areas are upper Chitral and Kaalsh valleys which have ripe wall nuts which are bigger in size; the size of Chitral wall nuts is rather small. I did went inside the centennial school which was opened up in 1926 by the HH Nasirul Mulk, principal was very kind and took me around the building, the main hall is gracious and spacious , I especially liked the Persian and Iqbal's couplets written on wall. School have a tennis court as well, a tree at the court have a rather unusual plaque which was put inside the trunk of maple tree and today it has been covered by the trunk an unusual sight.

I got my chappal polished from a street vendor and paid him rupees twenty, then bought two books one is the proceedings of third Hindu Kush conference held this year and other an urdu on the life of Nasirul Mulk {1936-1943 ruler}, at times one finds a wealth of information in these local books. Then long up walk back to mess, it is quite a walk and good one. Traffic is not much here yet one gets the smoke of vehicle passing close by and changing gear, air is generally clean and fresh with no odour, streets are clean and

very few stray dogs. One sees and notice women walking alone or with a child wearing veil but their eyes are always staring at you, I wear glasses to have a better look at them. Have yet to talk to any lady here other than the Carey Schoffield but natives have own class and charisma, I am more keen in having conversation with a Persian family.

In the mess lawn I had a talk with Nazir and mess JCO about the local food delicacies surprisingly there are no sweet dishes as part of Chitral food culture even the tae consumed in upper Chitral has a salt in it and the popular dish of Kheer has salt too. There are many types of bread here, one having only walnut inside is known as Polai and one having potatoes and wall nut inside the bread is called 'Aalomojhi'. Ghulmandi is a another bread in which goat cheese is put inside a bread and then pure ghee or butter is poured after heating over it. Walnut oil is used as a sprinkle over rice to give it an aroma, Chamrogh is the apricot juice in it dry apricot is soaked in water for a day and then filtered with fine cotton cloth and you get only the juice and no pulp of apricot, I have tried it at Skardu only draw back is that apricot initially upset your stomach quite heavily , but in other words it cleans your stomach thoroughly. Shuula is another dish which is a mixture of rice and duck meat. Chitral is famous for its bird shooting and that is why I was curious as how they prepare the shoot meat, but I think they do not bar b que it the way Afridi or Shinwari do. Chitrali kaalaey is another dish in which small pieces of bread alongwithKaveer which is a speciality of Mulkhow area it is like gaarm masala or kalazera of Rattu, it is used in cooking and also as a drink to fight fever, it is grown on ground and have flowers which

after drying are stored at present it cost Rupees 400 per kilogram , walnuts are rupees 300 per kilogram.

Chitral, 12th September 2013

I have just arrived back from Songohor the village of Lance Naik Nazir, after spending the night there; presently I am in the mess having a cup of tea and enjoying the weather, which has drizzled.

I went yesterday morning at 0900 hours, Nazir went with me to the Adda which is at the end of Shah Bazaar opposite PTDC Motel, the Hiace goes only when it is full, the scouts with me ensured that I should get the front seat but it was occupied thus I got into rear. The principal of centennial school was also on board, finally coach left at 1000 hours, weather was hot.

I had travelled on this road way back in 1995 and it seems as if nothing much has changed as far as the scenery is concerned but now it is metallic road till Booni. A hydel power is also under construction at Gowazi almost 25 kilometres away from Chitral. My interest now was to follow the siege of Chitral relief force, which came from Gilgit, and to see the area from that perspective. The scenery initially is rugged very narrow and then it opens up however the mountains on the roadside are muddy and kacha with plenty of landslides at frequent distances. Within the coach a lady in burqa and an old man were sitting behind me and when I stole the glance through driver's mirror I realised that she is quite

pretty and quite absorbed in the area, she at the end again put on the burqa. The journey to Booni took almost two hours, we changed direction along the River Yarkhun at times on east bank and at others on west, bridges mainly wooden planks one odd was pucca, I have to think where probably only at Chitral.

Valley has one similar pattern, it opens up and then closes again opens up and then closes, plenty of greenery and trees, on the far bank that is opposite to the road the mountains are barren rugged and it seems there was a road or track in old days because one can make out the track and few abandoned habitats in the form of stone shelters. Agha Khan University and school at Reshan, the government college building short of Booni, the hydel power staff colony, which is well guarded and well lay out, are few of the interesting places enroute. Speed of coach was quite high and scary in nature.

Booni is different from Chitral, I got down at the bazaar instead of Adda where Nazir's brother Amanullah was waiting, mobile phone service works here at Booni, I had a easy load and then got in touch with the Amanullah, we had to wait for an hour for connecting coach towards the Songohor. I spent the time waiting at the electric shop; I was surprised to see so many electric gadgets shop selling freezers, microwave oven, electric kettle and washing machine. I enquired about the sate of electricity not much better than the rest of country rather a bit better but the shopkeeper said that people like to buy and more over if one has bought anything the other will buy it even on a loan. This I have heard before as well.

Full Moon at Chitral

After an hour the Toyota land cruiser two door was ready for travel, I got the front seat, the seat was broken, driver a very young boy and vehicle had diesel filter clogging issue which creates a power surge at climb, a dangerous proposition but I think none of the passengers were aware of it, I kept my eyes on the road, driver and mentally ready to jump at any instant. The number of students were quite high on the road with very high proportion of girls, most of them were wearing all green uniform dress with white duppatta, I later came to know that theses are private school students, same holds for boys wearing shirt, tie and trousers, college boys were wearing white kameez shalwar, over all an open society which is enlightened, girls were talking with males and enroute driver also picked another female student. For me coming from the Khyber Agency it was quite a pleasant change. I forgot to mention about the headgears, in the coach from Chitral-Booni I saw one pathan man wearing traditional puggri, here many were wearing Chitrali cap but equal numbers were without it and very very few were wearing the white colour including myself.

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The track is the same that leads to Mastuj and in pathetic condition, muddy, landslides, narrow and at times it opens up, We stopped at mid point to put water into the radiator there were two three other jeeps also. Soon after an hour of drive we hit the track from where we diverted to the right and below to cross the river, a very narrow track very steep and then over the wooden bridge across the river, a vast ground then steep climb and we were soon into the village, I paid the fare for both of us {rupees 300 in total} from Chitral to Booni it was 150/. Now the walk in the village started,

narrow stony path with medium level walls on sides, fresh water flowing, thick vegetation, trees laden with apples of all kind green and red. We walked and walked and it was all uphill when we soon hit the open patch where under a walnut tree I saw an old man sipping tea which was being brought to him by a lady probably his wife but logically should have been his daughters; Amanullah told me he is the war veteran for whom I have come this far. We kept on walking and soon reach the end of village and there between a narrow path was Nazir's house, on one side his living and on other his baitahk. My main worry till now was to find the washroom, I thought whether they have western system or is it in the open. This is a major worry in strange places and very dangerous one because it takes minutes in mountains before you get stomach upset.

As we entered into the annexe or baitahk what a scene, green small lawn, a three room barrack and fruit laden trees, there stood two children, one boy of ten and a girl of four, both dressed very nicely and clean, expecting the guest. It reminded my own children and me of Skardu who were exactly the same, the house and scenery is same with High Mountain behind the house and green lawn. Children very well mannered, very friendly and very neat in nature and dress. I also admit that in these almost thirty years of military life this is the first time ever that I have visited a soldier's house, Nazir's father is a retired subedar major of 38 Frontier Force regiment, his brother has just passed masters in commerce and his internship will start from Monday at Booni in bank. Overall the village reminded me of Spanish village at potes, the Scottish highlands. Half the lawn was basking

under sun rays and we sat in the shade of apple tree, I pluck one apple and eat it, what a feeling it is, other factor was the washroom which Amanullah showed me and that took all my worries away, I just sat and played with children while Amanullah went for the lunch, I was hungry because I had not eaten anything since morning and it was now 1600 hours.

The valley which I have travelled so far and the place where I stood now is different in one aspect, it is away from main track and on the far bank thus historically and geographically more isolated than the one on the main caravan route. The Booni Valley Pass starts from here, the mouth is very narrow and it is only recently {30 odd years} that the track has been widened at the base otherwise the centuries old foot track is visible on the mountain. Songohor village is at the mouth of the glacier, which is quite long and steep and ends up at Twin Mountains, which are snow covered; their peaks no less menacing than the K-2 only altitude is the difference.

Soon the son of Nazir brought a pitcher, towel and a bowl, I being a socialist declined this but then under the cultural heritage I washed my hands. It is a beautiful thing of culture, which teaches the future the importance of cultural values a typical central Asian culture. Then both went inside and brought two slavers of dishes. I before coming here have been talking with the mess junior commissioned officer in charge about the local delicacies and he promised me to prepare on my arrival back, Nazir have been listening all this. There was Polai the bread made with yeast and swollen. Ghalmandi, the fried pieces of bread slim one, having the

fresh cheese in between, Darshki, which is a mixture of eggs and flour; it was good. Shank, which is a curd, made from the boiling of lassi, it is in small pieces and looks good. Sanawajee which is the only thing having any spice thus it is more favoured by me, it is nothing special but mixing of flour with the local masalas and only now one understands the importance of spice trade route.

Despite all my hunger I could not eat anything but simple bread and sanawaji, not that the other foodstuffs were not fresh but may be they were too fresh. The dairy products of each area, valley differs from other thus the taste of milk is also different; I somehow cannot take any dairy product other than that of my own village. After a cup of tea, which was sugarless because in these parts especially in Chitral they do not take sugar; but sugar was present in a plate. We set off for the veteran Nadir who was still sitting under the tree but there were two additional chairs also put there, I occupied one and Amin who also acted as the interpreter did other.

The children all sat around, there was only the spring water flowing melody, the walnut tree had a big hole in it and I enquired about its age and got the nodded affirmative. There was sun and there was shade also, in the close by distance was few fields having the sunrays falling in the middle and brightening up the already cheerful environs. Few women {two} were standing at rather far distance out of ear shot but looking after the grazing cows which numbered equal in strength in addition to the young calf.

Bit of silence as I absorbed the beauty and in any case you do not just go and ask the veteran a question, in most of

cases it takes bit of time to understand each other especially for me to start the question, in this case when I asked him, when were you enrolled? And got a puzzled look, it became obvious that he does not understand Urdu thus Amin asked the same and that is how I got it. I could understand few words and thus makes out the whole purpose, old man like so many others do not use hand signs frequently. Nadir was enrolled in 1945 in Chitral state Scouts at Drosh and in 1961 got his retirement papers from Drosh too. During 1947-48 Kashmir War he was part of artillery battery, it took nine mules to carry one howitzer. They moved through the Shandur pass towards the Gilgit amidst the snow and extreme freezing temperature; they had very little warm clothing with them as it was promised to be supplied at Gilgit. Nadir and the Chitral scouts remain committed for another seven months. Nadir highlighted that the Chitral states and Chitral Body guard fought the war separately. Nadir was deployed at Gurais with his guns for another seven months before they were pushed back. Nadir used to get Rupees 2 only, mainly for purchase of milk, although the pay then was rupees 22/ but Nadir like all other men got it after coming home, in case of nadir it was rupees 400/ quite a sum in those days. There was little ration and insufficient warm clothing at the front. Captain Rauf was in charge of the gunners, Major Mohiuddin who was the brother of Mastuj governor was in charge of the scouts contingent, thus in a way the princely family of Mehtar were all engaged actively in the liberation of Kashmir. For ration Nadir went out on hunting and hunted markhoor, they ate the meat, preserved it, presented the head to the officer in charge and made shoes and coat out of the rest; this is how nadir started living as the son of soil. For trouser the army

issued blanket was made. Nadir hated the trouser but it was made compulsory to be worn by the officer in charge ‘ thus I would put it on for his pleasure and parade and would quickly changed into shalwar’. During the operations the Indian Air force attacked many times and it was in one such attack that two scouts embraced shahadat, ‘ we would rush towards the cover as soon as we heard the aircraft noise’.

Nadir stayed t the front and then pulled back, on our way back the mule got buried under snow and it was only after the winter that it was retrieved as it was having official issued items on body, which were the cause of many enquiries.

I had nothing more to ask from him so we bid farewell and had a walk of the village, myself, Amin and his cousin who was in early thirties along with one teenage boy. We walked calmly and slowly through the paths made of stones and reached the outskirts by following the fresh water upstream, soon we reached the fresh water fountain head, it was enclosed by a stone hedge and inside fresh water was oozing out.

Amin narrated me the story about how all this place is the property of one man, Ziaart by the name who pretended to be made when the water channel was being made, he would throw the stones into the dug out channel and finally the people left it up as a bad joke and from that day Ziaart is acting normal and now own the channel, amin showed me the house of Ziarat later perched on the edge of the channel a good house.

Amin also narrated how the flood on 27th June 2007 played havoc here in the village, I did not paid any attention to it taking it as a flow of glacier in summer but I was bit alarmed as the village being old should not have gone through this tragedy.

I asked Amin more about that flood as we walked through the stoned paths in the village, meantime scanning the two women rather one woman and other grown up girl looking after their grazing cows and lambs. I further inquired about the livestock in the village and acme to know that few keep goats, as they require more attention rather lamb is the preferred pet, cows are there which are smaller in height. Amin told me that initially the flow of water in the village stream started increasing then overflowing and soon the colour also changed into mud but none paid any attention, then all of sudden at night the water rushed and the thundering noise of stones being crushed and hurled was frightening which did not allowed people even time to save their certificates of education, by this time we had reached the house.

Little girl was playful in mood and rolled on lawn, crawled under table and generally amused everyone. Amin's father Amanullah also joined in and we talked about the apples and pears. He also highlighted the flood, the earth close to glacier just opened up and started creeping upward this lasted for over three days, only one portion of village was affected badly the other mildly and remaining untouched. The water and adjoining stones took away many old walnut trees, according to him in his life and neither from his old people he

had seen or heard anything like that happening in village, best part is that they did not attributed it to any sin like Gomorrah.

It was now almost dark and soon the pale light bulb brighten up clearly indicating the low voltage but soon it was normal and we moved inside the room, There are two Amin big rooms, one washroom with eastern commode and other was closed probably a store, these two room are at two ends of veranda. Inside it was typical native culture with carpet on ground, cushions at the wall and one bed with bedding on it. The hand carved table mat and cornice cover indicates the artistic mind of probably Nazir's wife. I sat t one corner feeling tired and wanting to sleep, my muscles were aching but I had to sit, we had a glass of Chamrock which is a local juice of apricot, it is thick and has its own sweetness ideal for summer, the only drawback with it is that when taken for first time it can upset your stomach, I had taken two glasses and was now waiting for the result. Another feature of mountain or native food, water and bread is that it creates air in your stomach, you need to pass it out otherwise it can create lot of stomach pain. Now all these are culturally taboo issues but they are reality in deed. I soon change into a kameez shalwar which I had brought with me and also handed over the last of shawl to Aman, it was a brown colour male size and I had kept it for myself but now I feel that I have to present something to this old subedar, he was reluctant but happy and I was more than happy to present it to him, my only regret being that I had nothing for the children.

Soon another friend joins in he looked like a genuine tableeghi and was quite interested in my talk. I came to know

that Ismailis are in majority in this village and all sects were living happily till 1970 when on fateful day Maulvi Obaidullah made such an inflammatory speech that since then both sects are hardly on talking terms with each other, needles to say that moulvi himself was assassinated after two years. My mind arced towards the assassins of Hassan bin Sabah no doubt looks like their work or trademark. Another round of food despite all my resistance, rice but without the showering of walnut oil, chicken, turnips, bread, and again the cheese filled chapattis, it was too much but I had to eat it. Then came fruit and finally the beautifully decorated custard, which I was unable to eat. I resisted tea or green tea, promised them that I will take the fruit with me in the morning along with the dry fruit, the walnut oil which I was looking for last two months was finally there. Every valley has its own cooking pattern but not long ago everything here in Chitral was cooked in the walnut oil, which is distilled in the house. But now the Dalda or other oils have taken over still walnut oil has its own charm the way olives are to Mediterranean the same way Walnut oil is to Chitral and apricot Oil to Skardu, surprisingly there is no Apricot oil here. The walnuts of this village are quite famous because of their size, they still need another a month before they are fully ripe and then the outer green shell bursts open and then you have to shake the tree to get them on ground, at times even strong wind can do this job for you. A good tree fetches around 80 kilogram of walnuts which the buyers from Chitral takes away by paying almost one third of the price on which they sell at the end. It holds true for apples.

I had a peaceful night and was up at the fajr prayers remembering that the first vehicle from village leaves at 0600

hours. I sat out side in the lawn and watched the sky, it was still full of stars and soon the first sign of darkness going away appeared. Oh I forgot to mention the moon which rises from the mountains behind the house {just like Skardu house} and when I saw it last night it was probably of tenth day and beautiful to stare at. Now at dawn the birds chirping started coming into ears, the village has over four mosques and equal number of Jamat Khannas. I pluck one pear and enjoyed its freshness. Amin and Aman both came and I sat with the father talking about the village he told me that there are over seven different types of clans living in the village. Meanwhile the breakfast tray came in by this time I was really getting wary of food and complained joyfully that I am leaving this place mainly due to this excessive food which I have to devour where as I would prefer a fresh fruit here. I had to drink tea and eat few pieces of paratha.

I asked the old man about the castes in the village as who stitches shoes that does haircutting. The strange thing is that no particular caste exists in the village for such professions as they do in Punjab. This creates another problem how to classify the people according to their trades. Thus here in this village which is an old village probably in existence for centuries there are seven types of people who live, two categories namely Hishaey and Achanjay along with Ghonomein are the oldest who were always engaged in hardship, hard labour and beegar, then Raza Khel, Syed, Zoonde, Paksheer or Yashaey are the other castes. The highest caste is the Nawab or ruling class that there is none here in village although the old caste the rais who were ruling

it before Kator are probably exists close to village. Ismailis and Sunnis both belong to these classes.

Now the question comes in how this village evolved, it were the Ismailis who advanced from the Broghul towards the down south and at one time they overthrew the Kafir clans the original inhabitants of this valley the original Aryans. They then accepted Islam or the line between these two was at the Booni Valley. With the passage of time the incursion of Muslims or Turks from the Arandu valley put the Sunni sect in firm footing and it was then finally under Shuja ul Mulk in 1926 that a wave to convert the Ismailis forcibly into Sunni started which lasted for a bit but still its remnants can be seen. Today very few Ismailis openly confessed their sect; this is what I learnt from the Carey schoffield the principal of Major Langland's School at sinhur Chitral, she is of the opinion that majority of the Ismaili teachers simply do not want to answer the question about the sect. Ismailis according to Aman Ullah do not offer the Friday prayers, on another question about the fair and festivals in the village, the standard Muslim festivals of eid are celebrated and Ismaili also celebrate Nouroze which falls on 21st march every year. Now we started walking towards the intended jeep, the regular jeep had gone early and now a relative of theirs will drop me across the river at Perwak from where I will catch the jeep for Booni. I enquired about the graveyard in the village and was surprised to know that there is no community graveyard here, it used to be but feuds have now forced the people to bury their dead in their own lands. It is all due to scarcity of land.

We bid good-bye and Amin the brother came with me in the Suzuki jeep, which had been converted, into diesel till Perwak. In the way it was still not seven o'clocks, I noticed small boys carrying school bags and coming from the other part of river wearing shirt and tie. There were girls also quite grown up wearing all black uniform carrying books in hand. There is middle and high school for girls in the Songohor village, which is a government, owned that is why the uniform is black. Perwak has only middle school. We got down at the Perwak and waited for the jeep to take me to the Booni. Quite a number of students were walking or waiting for the transport. One has to admire the spirit of parents and children in seeking knowledge; these young boys and girls walk almost three –four miles one-way uphill and downhill one way everyday to gain knowledge. The girl's student while passing said salaam to all standing. Soon I got an old jeep CJ-5 to take me to Booni. It is an art to get into this jeep, you have to climb and then squeezed through the rods to sit, I had a rear seat, journey was uneventful, I dozed off many times, but the ever present risk of jeep going down is a reality which kept me on tenter hooks. We were seven people in the jeep, two students, three going for some judicial work, two of family probably going on medical mission.

At Booni, I had a shave and meanwhile I had put my bag into the waiting Hiace and when I came out I saw the Hiace moving out and soon it was gone, I was furious and had all kind of names for these Boonis but then I saw that my bag is now placed in the next waiting coach, it lessened up my anger. The coach left after an hour, I had a rear seat and every now and then the driver will stop to carry an errand for

someone at Chitral, it is how things work here, letter to post, something to purchase and some small item to give to someone. Seat was uncomfortable, day hot but later it drizzled, coach traversing at high speed, the constant yaw and kind of roll all put together makes this an uncomfortable ride. I again tried to grasp as much of the geography as possible. Valleys are narrow then open up then again closes down thus each encompassing a separate identity and this is how it was three centuries ago. I arrived back at Chitral at 1200 hours, got the taxi, which charged me two hundred, rupees and I was back in the warmth, hospitality and comfort of mess, nothing can beat it. Had a cup of coffee, thanked Nazir for all his hospitality, received a call from Khyber rifles and then went off to sleep.

Saturday & Sunday 14/15 September 2013, Petako Gaz , 1825 hours.

The General Officer Commanding the 17 Division Major General Sana Ullah Khan Niazaï has embraced shahadat at Dir today ; he was hit by an IED while he was going back after spending the night at Drosh. It was only on Friday evening that commandant and myself were sitting in the mess lawn when i came to know that he is coming by helicopter to visit at Langurbat post. The officers were busy in making out the approaches and take off pattern of helicopters while I just remained on listening post but what I gathered was that programme of general is subject to weather and if it

is bad then he may land at Drosh instead of Langurbat. I have never met him , I was scanning the pictures of the Chitral Scouts with the photographer Nazir on Saturday at the office and it was only then I saw his pictures , I had been mistaking him for Colonel Rizwan Rafi but that was Major General Sanaullah, giant of a man; and today at noon I heard from the colonel in charge of the military intelligence about the incident, colonel was going to the mess to hear it on private channels. This is the sad end of the general .

Weekend has been productive, I scanned the pictures on Saturday with Nazir , I still have a feeling that he has hidden certain pictures folders but I think I have enough for the book especially the polo pictures are good. Later I had a tea with the Naik Rab Nawaz from Mulkhaw at Phupokhan Gurzain, he corrected me that Ratnei does not mean a cafe rather it is small lawn. He also highlighted that his language Khowar is the more correct version and it is heavy for others , I agree with him. The term Chitrali is as confusing as the term British, in that case it encompasses English, Scott, Irish and Welsh. Same holds true for the Chitral, it is not an ethnic group rather a conglomeration of six mountainous states which are presently the tehsils of District Chitral. In one of the pictures which was taken in Mastuj in early fifties the governor of Mastuj is wearing a pagri which is more of Dogra style than the pathan pattern. Now this is very pertinent lead as the governor always wear correct official pattern of the native state dress but it clearly indicates the absence of Chitrali cap and there by indicating an alien ship of governor. Similar pattern was narrated by the naik also over cup of tea. His father is a retired subedar from FF , a brother was shaheed

in Kargil he was serving in Azad Kashmir Regiment there. He himself was initially enrolled in police but later his father pressurised him to join either army or Chitral scouts and now he is a driver here. At Phophokan which means children in Chitrali I saw an old man who looks mentally unstable. I was told by the driver that he was enrolled as a gardener by Colonel Murad in 1986 and since then he is living here doing small errands, he is always ready to fight if any one makes even a gesture towards the Chitral Scouts vehicles or men. The standard of park and the canteen is outstanding; it is certainly among the top ten parks of army in Pakistan. The atmosphere so peaceful with the river Chitral making noise flowing just feet away , you can enjoy the waves and currents of water following under the bridges while sitting on a bench and sipping coffee.

The bakery makes excellent and fresh cake russ, pizza and rolls apart from samosa and kebabs. The other adjoining park is the Chinara or maple gardens it is on the east side of road which separates both parks, old gigantic trees with vast umbrella of branches practically covering the whole lot of park but then this is the beauty of it, ample sitting places have been created by having wooden benches, I saw a shop in which a person was making something on enquiry it was revealed that he is making the samosas for the park, he offered me to have a samosa but I pended it which I am now regretting. There are two bridges, and these parks are adjacent to the new bridges but as one walks few yards the old bridge and road is hit , this bridge is now barbed due to its structure I believe but more due to security, next to it is the Murad's mosque built on the River , one of the most beautiful mosque

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in Pakistan almost a replica of old Jhelum mosque but it stands out in terms of its design, architecture, location, colour and beautiful rose garden.

On the way back we stopped at the Chitral polo ground which is at the east end of Ataleeq Bazar opposite radio Pakistan and PIA office, a beautiful scene , long elongated uneven green ground which is ascending towards the south , over a dozen polo players were playing and equal number of horses were being made ready astride the ground. Over a thousand men were watching the game, on the far end the two musicians were playing harmonic melodies which indicates the goal and the signature tune of the player taking the shoot is played, sun as not very bright, rather cloudy in nature. We sat at the northern end or the bazaar end, two old pavilions are still in use along with a newer one , the players and others were just sitting there.

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An interesting day , it was Friday and i wanted to utilise the day important thing to do was to get the pictures of the mounted infantry and the boards of the different appointments. So I was up by the first light , ok bit exaggerating make it second light but i went with Major Kazmi and Captain Fizan along with Major Arbab. Typical mountain morning , little bit of rush in the bazaar and then we were in the fort but this twenty odd minutes drive was enrich, the discussion or rather i joined the conversation when Major Kazmi brought the subject of village defence committees and i enquired about them. Today was the interview day with

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three or four officers waiting to be interviewed by the commandant.

Typical apprehensions and anticipations of the officers, one goes back year backs when i also went through the same anxiety , to get the house , to get the hut, and apprehensions . Thus it all is very enjoyable and on the other hand one thinks of how time passes so slowly in military life but in a sense it is the beauty of the system ; but it can be a drawback as well. I got the sketch made by the Lance Naik Zahid of the education cadre , an excellent effort beautiful and according to my desire. I took the pictures of it and many other maps of the area and Chitral scouts and the Afghanistan. Then i was lucky to get the commandants briefing from Major Kazmi with whom i am having more informal relationship; I am admiring his qualities. I came to know about the incident at Ursun a couple of years when over 22 Scouts along with the three policemen and levies were killed by the attack through Arandu by the afghans, centuries old pattern; thus i was interested in knowing this important episode in the history of Chitral Scouts the worst night of their history. Meanwhile one C-130 was scheduled to come to Chitral as the pilot of the aircraft had informed the adjutant on mobile . Heard Sindhi in the adjutant office as one officer an ex 5 Light Ack Ack along with his wife herself an army doctor a captain both belonging to the Hyderabad were sitting for interview and talking in Sindhi , what a sound what a feeling to hear it at Chitral. Commandant then had to leave but the Photographer Nazir had taken his pictures and had completed all that required from him. I now waited for the file on occurrences which had the detail of the Ursun incident. The headmaster of the school

came and gave me the essays written by the students but the best news was from the tailor who promised to give me the shirt by noon , the work non commissioned officer also showed me the hand woven cloth that was being weave for me. Took some pictures. One interesting fact that has emerged from the adjutant briefing is the Denzing Hall which i had initially heard from Major Siraj Ul Mulk, it is behind the Phokopan Gurzain. I got the albums from commandant offices and also the file but after giving a piece of mind to the clerks . It seems quite in order with some of these clerks. While coming back i wanted to get to the photographer because my sixth senses are warning me about these tradesmen. In the room a pleasant surprise in the form of the shirt , what a feeling what a cloth, so light yet so warm , soft in nature very light. I again went back with the Major Kazmi after having smoked a joint to get the photographer. In the way i found the talk most intoxicating.

Kazmi narrated that they had given the weapons to the Kalash people after two of their men were killed but they refused to take it stating that they do not require it and they trust the state for their protection. Secondly in another village the villagers gave it after

Injigan

Injigan is the western most valley of district Chitral, its literal meaning in local dialect is ‘prosperous’. On its east is tehsils Mulkhaw, on west Afghanistan, north Hindukush

and in south is Chitral Town and tehsils. TirchMir the highest peak of the Hindukush is situated here, near Karim abad, Rokhon is the second biggest peak situated near Village Sainak, people call TirchMir as the abode of fairies.

Injigan is divided into three valleys namely Karimaabd, Urkari & Garmchasma. Weather is extreme in winter which blocks almost all ground routes due to heavy snow, spring starts from April onwards. Lotkow is the other name for Injigan, River Lotkow is the largest river of the valley which originates from Kotal Doawra and joins River Chitral near Chitral airport. River Bagosht, Othrai, Gol, Urkari and Karimaabd stream all join in River Lotkow before it terminates. The river is famous for its clear water and trout fish. There is mainly one crop in Injigan except in Bahtooli, Shigoor, Momi, Mough and Mardan Koh. The best grapes are produced in area Mough which are distilled to make local wine. Injigan has many other peculiarities but it is the presence of natural sulphuric warm water which is available year around; it is this which makes the Injigan as the most neat and clean valley in whole of northern areas especially when in other areas people seldom take bath in winter. Mough is famous for the Chitrali patti the hand woven cloth. Urkari valley is the most under developed area of the Injigan, there was not even a jeep able track till 1983. Potatoes of Injigan are also very famous and in great demand. The very first person to be enrolled in Chitral Scouts in 1903 was from Yoft, Shaib Ali Lal son of Khokhan Baig, he later rose to the rank of subedar major the very first subedar major who was a

non Kator¹ he retired in 1932. Sultan Jawan alias Manoor, is another brave son of soil who took active part in the Gilgit War of 1947. Sultan Khan Murdaan was born in 1924 at village Murdaan and join Chitral scouts in 1945 and took active part in 1948 War as Bren gunner, he embraced shahadat 40 kilometres short of Srinagar in a hand to hand fight with enemies. Another stalwart of the area and of 1947 war is Islam Shah who retired as naib subedar, he was enrolled in Chitral Scouts in 1932, he died a natural death in 1990. Ghair Dum Shah Chaweelo who has died in 2002 was another brave scout of Chitral.

Injigan has a predominant Ismaili sect adherents, there are Fatimid also who are regarded as the non .

The cultural history and heritage of the Injigan is heavily inspired by the Tajikistan, Badkhashan, Yarkhun, Kashgir which is a logical conclusion of the valley being as the entrance into the Chitral valley. The Jinan China utensils are a speciality of the area which used to come from the Kashgir and china; they were almost unbreakable and above all had the uniqueness to point out the poison in food thus these were very popular with the ruling class. Silver Mushraba also comes from Faizabad in Afghanistan and are given as dowry utensils. Kohkan Baigi si the name of extra large big Deg which were imported in thousands by the prince Kohkan Baig and hence it carries his name even today. Ghaan is another utensil which is made of walnut wood it si big in size the smaller version is called Langri. Tong is a vessel used for keeping milk, lassi and curd, it is the smallest of all utensils.

¹ Muhammad rahim, tareekh Injigan, hafiz , chitral, 2006, pp, 16-58.

Ghori is the equivalent of Madaani which is used for making curd out of milk.

Drosh

Drosh, I have finally made it here, left the Chitral Mess at 1400 hours luckily Captain Fayzan came to mess on a defender and he was going to Langurbat so I got the lift from him, he was rather embarrassed that I am sitting in the rear but this is how the army life goes but I do appreciate his concern.

Drosh is a magnificent fort, built in 1939 on a higher ground which overlooks the whole valley, at this place the Chitral River is joined by a small river coming from the north; Madaglasht, which is a predominant Persian speaking valley comprising of few villages with ne odd Chitral Scouts post. On the back of the Mess and the fort, {mess is at the edge of the fort on the higher slope} there are two piquet's of British era, one is known as the Dommel named after the village which is down below and other one is known as Azeem piquet named after someone which I have to trace.

Mess service is poor by any standard, I had the lunch comprising of mutton karhai, very ordinary cooked with trace of lamb smell, salad again just average rather poor and now waiting for a cup of tae for half an hour without any trace of it. Otherwise a classic mess by design and style it is almost a replica of Chitral mess in the colour and design. One small corridor then ante room on left and dining hall on right with

kitchen adjacent to dining hall and billiard room/library adjacent to ante room. It is all in wood, which makes it so special. Good silver and trophies, everywhere it is reminding of Lieutenant Colonel Murad Khan, I was thinking about him while sitting next to waterfall as why he committed suicide, was it something in the air or the area, maybe after spending few nights here I may understand him better. It is 1700 hours and sun is still setting its rays on the corner of mess and that speaks of the people who selected the place and designed it to have maximum sun in winter. It is much peaceful than Chitral, no more noise of motorcycles or busses only the constant melodic rhythm of water fall but after short time it also looks like a mental torture. Lot of greenery and flowers, roses are still in bloom, lawn is well manicured. Only three nights ago Major General Sana was staying the night here without knowing that it is going to be his last one. By 1725 hours the sunrays have left the mess building, it is cloudy anyway.

Drosh covers the approach towards the Chitral and Madaglasht, the River Chitral flows at its base {Drosh Town} and runs for another fifteen miles before making a right turn towards the Domel Nisar- Mirkhani-Arandu to enter the Afghanistan. In this way Drosh is the key fort, the base depot. Occasionally the snarl of a donkey rips through the silence and add a bass to the water melody to which I have become useful. To this is the added noise of football being hit hard. They play football every evening. The mosque ahs just called the faithful to the prayers. Electricity is the same as anywhere else, selected timings, which are generally abided by, but it is poor in watts, the generator than supplies the power.

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Fort is narrow from inside and vehicle cannot reach mess, one has to climb a dozen stairs to reach it.

Drosh Killa.

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Drosh is on the southern bank of River Chitral and Drosh Fort popularly known as Drosh Killa is on the northern banks of river Chitral, why the fort was not made on the southern bank is obvious when one looks at the area, The River Chitral is in fact a pass which leads to the Chitral the ancient caravan route was on the southern bank whose remains can be seen even today thus the fort was constructed primarily to keep an eye on the route and also to guard against the Dir insurgents.

There are two forts in Drosh one is known as Chitrali Fort and other as Drosh Killa, the former has been turned into a school as back as 1937 while other remained as headquarters of Chitral Scouts for almost fifty years till 1992. Piquets are another enigma because they are only on the north and east of Fort. The fort is large, big, magnanimous and simple in construction, it is in tiers and have solid walls which are now broken and replaced with barbed wires. Originally there was only one entrance into the fort on the western side having a piquet it is disused now; a pity. There are two rings of fort, one which is uncovered by wall and other the proper fort where the gate leads you to the quarter guard and then into the fort. Presently there is another path which is for motors which can lead up to mess but one still has to climb stairs to reach to the mess. From quarter guard another inclined flight of stairs leads to the commandant office and from there to the mess. It is at quarter guard that a original

wall painting has been preserved although refreshed every now and then which is a mirror of the past. It shows that almost everything on the northern bank of river belongs to Chitral Scouts and the assistant political agent who used to sit here instead of Chitral.

There are old maple and walnut trees everywhere, most strikingly the four maple trees at the four corners of the ground down below the mess building are eye catching , they are placed originally at the four corners of the ground in such a symmetry that there shadows almost covers the ground. Then there is another tree at the hockey ground which can now be called as football ground as none plays hockey now; it also shows how important hockey was in the past {1926}. This ground actually divides the whole complex of the fort, the barracks of troops are on the one side of ground and on the other these steep path takes the visitor into the fort arena.

Presently the No.3 Wing of Chitral Scouts, 42 Azad Kashmir Regiment and Mortar Battery of Chitral Scouts are sharing the fort, the infantry battalion is mainly using as the rear headquarters so are the all the wings, all kind of stores are here, the Ghee, tea, match, charpoy, salt to name few are located here. There is no dearth of accommodation. The Chitral Scouts training school is also here inside the fort complex. The whole fort is inclined in construction, there is hardly any level place less the hockey ground and the stony tennis court which is adjacent to the main gate of fort.

Drosh Fort 1899.

Drosh Fort's construction started in May 1899 and was completed in October 1900. The fort is on the northern bank of River Chitral, on a higher ridge overlooking the complete valley and route of River Chitral and River Madaglasht. Thus from its sitting it is obvious that main threat was from the afghans and the southern circle was the most volatile. In the ancient times the track from Bashgal in Afghanistan entered into Chitral through Arandu and then following the hill track it passes through Domel Nisar-Mirkhani-Drosh-Ayun-Chitral-Garm Chasma and then exiting through Shah Salim Pass. Thus two separate entities one on the southern bank and other on Northern Bank were flourishing. There were very few crossing points on the river and even then the hanging bridges were unable to take the full load of laden camel, horse or mule caravan, only in military expedition a force was able to cross it. In summer the river was in full fury as now and in winter the crossing was possible.

Drosh Fort is built on the ridge in a multi tier design, which is inclined, and hardly any level space is available and even less was in the past. Fort is rectangular in design having mud barracks all along the four walls; these barracks are the distinct hallmark of the fort. The wooden pier style corridor along walls are narrow yet wide enough to allow two men to cross each other. Firing points are available after every seven feet; the best part of the fort was in its rapid concentration of fire and soldiers at all time mainly due to the design. Four piquet at four corners along with equal number of small entrances built of iron doors and one main entrance, which in

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the past had a gigantic iron and wood door. Quarter guard is on the right side of main gate inside the fort.

First major expansion of the fort took place in 1921 after the third afghan War when new barracks were constructed and second one took place in 1939 and then in mid eighties it was almost complete in every sense when the headquarters were moved back to Chitral. Since then the fort is living in past nostalgia as lack of manpower is barely enough to keep it working.

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In the original pattern the complete northern bank was only with the military and political administration. The road leading from Fort to the bridge on the River Chitral was and still is the property of Chitral Scouts and that include the complete bazaar with over two hundred shops. Now the bazaar which has sprung up along the main road is known as new bazaar and Scouts bazaar is called the old bazaar.

Initially the commandant house was inside the fort but in 1920 it was constructed outside the fort and then finally demolished in 2010 to make room for the expansion of Scouts school. Chitral scouts garden is located across the river, this is one of the largest gardens among all corps of Frontier corps, the old landing ground which was built in 1921, last had flight in 1954 and since then is abandoned and turned into a cricket field with proper brown pitch, it is a fantastic field.

Fort had three grave yards, one known as cemetery had both the Muslim and Christian military personnel's and is located at the south eastern end, the Hindu graveyard was situated a mile further east but now a days there are no

remnants of that graveyard, however the other cemetery is maintained by the scouts and the army unit stationed in Drosh {they are here since 2009}.

The contractors bring fresh ration, fodder for animals, petrol and other commodities as they have been doing it for last hundred years. The Chitral Mountain Artillery is also stationed here, it has been its home base for a century and despite all other changes this has remained in vogue. Mounted infantry also originally had their birth here, the stables are still functional and the horses, mules, donkeys all live together, {mounted infantry only looks after the horses and animal transport is responsible for donkeys}.

Presently the lush green hockey field serves as football ground with daily matches being played between the asr-maghrib prayers, it is a treat to the eyes to see such colourful attires running around a ball. In the parade ground, which is now known as Murad Ground the civilians are allowed to play the games in the evening, as there are no other sports facilities available to them, similar is the attitude towards the use of cricket field.

Mountain Hospital was also at Drosh before it was a also shifted to the Chitral. The present half mounting barracks were once the hospital wards, there are two such barracks, the bigger one was general ward and smaller one was bifurcated into officers' ward and offices. The operation room was built later in 1938 {present MRC}. All barracks inside have two rooms, one inner which is larger in size and other a small room, wooden planks and mud has been used in original

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construction and there is no trace of iron. The bricks were used later either in expansion or in restoration.

Fort from inside is all green, chinar, apple, pear trees are almost everywhere yet the four chinar trees at the four corners of the office barrack are worth appreciating; they were planted with precision and then looked after for long from grazing horses and other animals to reach such heights. They are as old as the fort itself.

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Drosh Officers mess dinning hall.

Words at times lose their value because they are used daily and for everything thus the word impressive may look odd but this is what it feels to be sitting here at midnight when outside the yellow glow of full moon is getting pale because the moon is now up the mess, for hours in a stoned state of mind I have been staring at the two passes the pass on left the Chitral and on the right or northern leads to Madaglasht.

The hall is covered with walnut wood almost touching the ceiling all around, with hand carved fire places, shields on wall the PMA, Engineers, Punjab Regiment, FWO, head trophies of Markhoor are staring from all corners with the head mascot on the southern wall kept an eye on me while I was having the dinner alone. Three silver trophies the bronze infantryman holding and charging with the bayonet rifle, the big silver bowl in the centre and traditional ibex trophy without which no room of Chitral Scouts seems to be complete. On the far end at the fire place half a dozen silver ware and a tray below the Markhoor trophy, windows are on the southern side with ample space in the front to have the

breakfast while having a look at the lawn and valley down below especially the Chitral Pass is in the centre. Ceiling is also made of wood panels with chandelier hanging down , two ceiling fans and two lights on each end completes the scenery .

Hall and mess are deserted now and they are in this state since 1992 when the headquarters move from here to Chitral, it looks haunted now, I sat alone in dark in the ante room and felt the company of all past visitors, I thought of Commandant Colonel Murad as what made him commit suicide, I don't believe that he was upset on his posting that speaks low of him. Did he really thought of himself as indispensable after commanding the Chitral for twelve long years, there was another commandant back in 1937-1947 but he left his post in a jovial mood so why Muard committed suicide. I have no plausible answer to his actions. Maybe he was instable like most such persons, lets not forget that he was a poet also, a bachelor, a lost love. Who knows, maybe he was insane or he was high on that night but on what that made him took his life. Sitting and looking at the Chitral pass I thought of the ' Man who would be King', it is similar to Murad's life.

Madaglasht are another enigma, who are they and how come the Persian language and customs have survived in so many years and centuries or even millenniums. Are they lost soldiers of Darius or Feroze who was running away from Alexander, is it possible that they entered from the Bashgal Valley or Arandu and instead of going into the Chitral valley they took the northern valley, similarly may be the

Alexander's soldiers took the north western valley in their chase and they ended up at the Kalash Valley. The Kalash Valley is on the opposite bank of River Chitral just across the Drosh.

The old caravan route is on the southern bank of the river the reason being that they never wanted to cross the river with laden horses and camels. Thus the whole route encompasses the southern part of present day Chitral, including the Lotkow valley leading straight to Kashkar {TirchMir}. Even the name of River Chitral is controversial , from Drosh down to Arandu it should be known as River Drosh , as River Chitral is only christened with this name after the amalgamation of river Lotkow and river Yarkhun just miles west of Chitral Town.

The Drosh has the same place in relation to Chitral what Jamrud Fort has to Khyber Pass. The Chitral starts from here and finishes at Chitral a mere 40 odd miles this is what Chitral was in past.

It is strange feeling to sit alone in a room which at some time in past had a glorious time where the presidents and prime ministers had dined and laughed, now it is haunted never to have the same glory again. The fort was constructed on 1899 and commissioned in 1900 , probably this mess was constructed then or few years later because it was almost religious to have the mess for the officers and there were few infantry battalions stationed here along with artillery pieces. From 1929 the aircraft started making landings here it must be a great day for the natives to see the aircraft coming and going. What went through their minds was it an end of the

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world to them or the ultimate symbol of whiter race superiority.

The PMA shield has a history because it was presented by Major General Rahat Latif Butt who came here in 1981 but he had been here in 1954 as a cadet himself , what a feeling to be at the same place where you have been there as a cadet and now as a commandant. He has written about that in the visitors book of Chitral Mess .

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In the darkness and in the solitude of the night the Markhoor looks almost alive, its long hair hanging down from his chin just like an old religious man. Here the fear is not of any mortar or artillery shell as in Miranshah but that of fairies and werewolves and other such things, the place looks ideal for such ventures. What about the hidden history of the mess, the scandals the murders the gossips ,at least we know about one the murder and about others one had to run his imagination and there is no end to that.

It was Captain James of 14th Punjabis who married the local girl in 1899 on the Christmas day the background of this is that James had gone on the hunting while on leave and it was at OsiakGol that he felt down almost killing himself but was saved by a local girl who had gone out to fetch the water and she dragged him to safety , looked after him and even nursed him and that was the reason for that love story ending in such a happy ending. But the story did not finished here because next year the Captain James died while on hunting at the same place.

Full Moon at Drosh, 19th September 2013.

This time the full moon stretched for over three nights, first night at Chitral Officers Mess two nights ago when I spotted it and since I was monitoring it for last one week thus I was confident about it, it rose from the mountains above the mess , the wall across the River Chitral and slowly travelled over the mess tree and making a loop came over head, playing hide and seek through the maple leaves. The Chitral town basked in its yellow glow, I text Reena about it, thought of my children and wife and mother as much of my life revolves around this full moon. In my childhood lying on the cot with my mother on the roof and watching the full moon. My aunt narrating me the stories. It was common fable that the grandma is knitting the wheel, it was called Chanda Mama. The word Chanda is since used to point towards the beloved, it is common pet name of all girls apart from gurya. Time passed by and I forgot about the full moon for decade and it was neither in military academy nor in field exercises but at Siachen in 1988 that I saw and fell in love with moon forever. I had come out of my igloo in the frozen month of January at over 18000 feet give and take few feet but I got my insignia of mountaineering there thus it was definitely over 18000 feet. The moon outside was fascinating , I pissed which was the reason of my coming out of the warm igloo and felt nirvana. Only then I saw the moon in its full glory. The mountains all around as far as eye can travel were covered in white thick cream of snow and ice. The Eagle Peak, the twin towers, the narrow cliff, the deep gorge and glacier down below were all visible and pure white. I stood there for eternity, nothing was in my mind but the sheer magnitude and

magnum of beauty of nature. I was in awe of it and need not to move but at last the cold forced me to go inside. Probably next time it was blizzard and next time it was partial cloudy and that was the end of it.

Then came love affairs, one with my wife under the full moon, I was lying in a bushy stream just to have a glance of her when she would walk by at her after dinner walk with her colleague. Writing letters and reading them under full moon. Then came the tragic part and the suffering of a lost love to be borne under the full moon. In next phase it was flying in full moon, it was always conducted in full moon conditions thus it became a second nature to be aware of it. Watching Karachi and surrounding islands on a calm full moon with sea waves touching the land, even the tortoises were visible, the city lights and the harbour, the airport's runway lights and their changing colours as one approaches them in a glide. Next it was Thailand Kohpagangan island in the arms of a German lady watching the full moon and only then I saw how the sea waves are termed as high tides and how human tides corresponds to it. Back to life and a walk under full moon with my school heart girl Reena near her hostel and the aroma of the night queen flowers. The marriage and the full moon slowly and gradually just faded away, then came children and the mountains but I think I have omitted one of the most eventful full moon, the one I saw at K-2 base camp with Pink Floyd and the hashish; it changed my life forever and I came back to it after few months and saw it again without any worry of food or place to sleep.

Full Moon at Chitral

With my children I enjoyed it lying in the cool summer of Skardu for two seasons watching it to come from the north west of my house, I enjoyed it my pack of dogs and their pups holding them in my arms , I saw it with snow all around walking alone under its spell towards the glacier with my house behind me.

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Then came Glasgow, the full moon was then my link to my past, to all my life because I had left all of it for nothing, everything was gone except this full moon, I gave night duties under its light I came back from library, club, bar under its spell. I dreamed with my eyes open when ever it was in full glory. I had it last again at Thailand with Reena and other one at Aitcheson but never again with my children and wife since Skardu. Last full moon was at Hydapass thinking about from where Alexander crossed it and then having almost five successive full moons in North Waziristan with hardly any lapse of concentration some of them were spent with the artillery duel with the miscreants going on under its light and now this one.

Now I don't think of anyone in particular, yes Reena comes to my mind my mother comes to my mind because I have seen quite of these with her lying on the cot in the village on summer nights thinking and talking of life and the beauty of it.

Madaglasht.

Full Moon at Chitral

Madaglasht is a north-western valley of Chitral or more precisely that of Drosh. Its fame is in its being Persian speaking, Persian culture, 2000 odd families living in a remote area. They are also famous for being arms manufacturer of highest esteem in the past and now for weaving and knitting woollen sweaters and socks.

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I went there out of curiosity on 19th September on a public transport, I left the Drosh around 1500 hours as the jeep intend going that direction leaves the town at same time, there are two methods of going there one is the public transport which i have mentioned and there are not more than few vehicles that go there, other is to hire the public taxi mostly Toyota Binjo cars which can also take you there , the jeep fare was rupees 200 , i am not sure about the taxi fare. There are no hotels at Madaglasht and any tourist intends staying night has to lodge himself with villagers. I did not knew anybody and just a sense of adventure took me there.

The track leading to Madaglasht starts just on the northern edge of Drosh, initially the track is good as compared to other mountainous tracks but after twenty odd minutes it stars becoming ascending, narrow, stony and dangerous. The Sheeshu River flows all along, it has clear water which is coming from numerous brooks, fountains, springs that falls into it on regular interval. At times its bed is broad but never is it too narrow. There are villages on other side too, village is a wrong word rather few houses or even lone house perched high on mountains amidst the forest.

The journey kept on going, jumps and more jumps, one of the passenger in the rear puts his glass wrapped in a

cloth behind our seat and we two sitting in the front seat did not objected to it as it is the common custom here , none complains because tomorrow it will be his turn to face the same dilemma. We had two breaks in between where the driver put water in radiator and passengers had a smoke. Most of the passengers were wearing jeans also, all in all we were twelve male passengers with no female on board..

We drove through small packets of habitation, the overall scenery was dry but after almost three hours we reached near green belt and this was start of Madaglasht area. The Madaglasht word holds true for a an area but among them one village also carry the same name which was my destination. This valley is peaceful and as such no requirement of even having a scout post. The scenery short of Madaglasht not only differs from the other in terms of the tree but also in the pattern of their graves, almost all graves were covered with wooden coffin something very peculiar to the Kafirs. I saw three shrines also one of the very first that i saw in Chitral. Jeep finally stopped at Madaglasht, a small mountainous hamlet, we stopped on the home bank of a wooden bridge , the real village is on the other side where driver took me there and we came across Naib Subedar Ali Nawaz of the Chitral scouts he is retired now since 2007. He was referred by the same scout who came to drop me at the Drosh. I was mentally ready to spend the night in the village guest room on payment but Ali took me to his home.

Ali's home is small at least from the direction through which we entered, a small lawn having fruit trees , apples and pears with few space reserved for growing up of kitchen

vegetables, the river flowing next to it. Ali was busy in harvesting his field but now he left everything and just concentrated on being a host. I met his children, three in number all in toddler phase and one of them was going to school, later i learnt that Ali in total have six children, four daughters and two sons. His two elder daughters are studying science, one in class 12th and other in matric , the third one being grade seventh. His daughter Riffat who is studying in matric came and shook my hand which is something very unusual in this part of world but then this is what Persian culture is all about. She is one of the most prettiest girl i have come across in Chitral, blue eyes and fair colour with good height, very soft spoken , she sat with me and converse and I thought of my daughter who is of same age and immediately started liking her like my own daughter. I asked her many questions about her school, her family and so on. They all were speaking Persian, the young ones just jumping around but in a pleasant way, no crying or shouting or abusing. Ali's cousin a post master who has recently retired also join us and being retired we both had many commonalities. I saw Ali going out and inquired about where he is going and he pleasantly mentioned shop. I was little worried lest he purchase anything for dinner but he just calmly waved his hand and went about his a business.

I learnt that whole village is comprising of Ismaili faith Muslims and there are few Sunnis as well, i have seen one odd flag depicting the jamait uleema islam at the start of the village. I also noticed free movement of womenfolk which is s so common in Punjab but so rare in this part. Evening was now growing along, weather was bit cool{Madaglasht is at

6000 feet}. We moved inside into the hujra, a medium size room having carpet and cushions on floor , pictures of Ali Nawaz in frames in uniform adores the fire place, few religious posters but nothing unusual in any sense. The washroom very neat and clean. I inquired about the electricity and water arrangement in the village. There is a hydel power house which supplies the electricity to the village around the clock , it is less but still better than nothing. Water is again coming from fresh water spring. There are two schools for primary education and one middle school and one college all less one are being run by the Agha Khan community welfare organisation. The teachers are good and qualified. In summer there is one month holiday in July and two months off in winter January-February. In winter there is heavy snow fall and all routes are practically blocked. The other end of Madaglasht is also blocked with just a foot track that leads to the Goolen a small village north of Chitral. Thus people can travel from here to Chitral but it is only used by foreigner trekkers; no more there due to security threats.

For an hour we played with kids, i was feeling embarrass for not having any gifts with me for the family, i gave rupees 1000 to Riffat to buy books and later gave all my change 250 rupees to the toddlers. Ali Nawaz later joins in and we talk about the militia life , he was trained as a bomb disposal expert but alter he opted for retirement as he wanted to have more time with his family. He is now looking after his meagre lands but happy and content. His elder daughter also came in to say hello , she also shook hands and exchange pleasantries so did the third daughter. Dinner was ready. The utensils were taken from this room by his two daughters and

Ali helped them by putting the sheet on carpet and laying the plates. He had cooked a chicken the highest sign of hospitality, i felt bit sorry for causing him such , rice and salad along with yogurt. It was excellent cooking, delicious and very aromatic. We three males had the meal and later Ali took all the items away and i believe then others had the meal.

Postmaster narrated me tat they all are Ismaili, their forefathers came from Afghanistan but their Persian is different from them, they had opted for this land . I have my own reasons to partly believe this aspect of history. Thousand years ago or at least five hundred years ago the population was very less and not more than twenty odd families must have been residing here. Why and how they acme here will remain a mystery, they can also be a runaway soldiers just like the people living in Kalash. Apart from their language there is nothing peculiar bout them on the surface but inside this cultural variation and openness is the key to understand them.

Ali laid down elaborate bedding comprising of few mattresses and quilt. I inquired about the hand knitted sweaters and he went around and brought half a dosen of them i bought one for rupees 1800/. Ali gave me a pair of woollen socks as a souvenir and in return i gave him my sunglasses. Night was peaceful. I left the door unlocked, a sense of fear came momentarily but it was natural and i soon over rid it and enjoyed a pleasant night rest. The vehicle in the morning leaves at 0500 hours thus i was up at 0430 when Ali came with warm water bowl for shave, soon he came with three parathas and two fried eggs along with cup of tae. His wife must have been busy in preparing them for half an hour ago.

There was no time so i packed the food and Ali carried my small bag and we reached the jeep stand where despite all of Ali's protest i agreed to sit in the rear of jeep as the front seats are normally reserved for females in the valley.

It was a dangerous journey under moon light, still dark and driving through the mountainous track which is rugged and zigzagged. I was sitting on the temporary mat along with three other passengers and three were standing with the iron bars at the rear, jeep was open. I wished and sensed that safety is more in standing with your eyes facing the road as only then you can make out the progress of jeep. In my case being sitting would be bit too late in jumping out in case jeep traverse into the river down below. These thoughts kept my mind occupied. We climbed up the steep track then down, another sharp turn and then another sharp descend and this continued for an hour before jeep started staggering and soon came to an halt, it ah darn out of diesel. We had practically blocked the road or track and now there were five or six other vehicles behind us , our driver got the diesel from them {six litres} by sucking through their fuel tank and this is how i reached back to Drosh by 0900 hours with very sore back yet i was full of admiration for the Ali Nawaz. I have seen the Madaglasht the Persian culture and got an insight into them.

Mirkhani Fort. 24th September 2013

Full Moon at Chitral

On 24th September 2013, i had left Drosh at 1500 hours for the Mirkhani, it seems difficult proposition to do so because i am lazy and if i spend a night at one place then it seems almost a miracle if i am able to leave but i had to do so . Mirkhani Fort is on main Lowari-Drosh road, it is half an hour drive from Drosh and the fort itself s visible about five minutes short of it as it stands high on a ridge overhanging the River Chitral which makes two omega bends here and then set course for Afghanistan via Dommel Nisar and Arandu .

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I travelled by a public transport, i got a car taxi from Drosh, it was already full but the scout and the driver was kind to accommodate me and the elderly person sitting in front seat despite all my protests vacated the seat, i feel embarrass over this .En route i saw the fort at Nagur which was built by the local royalty in 1929. The fort is impressive and looks like a military fort, it has one hanging bridge which connects it with the main road, at night the bridge is closed down there is a post of scouts also to ensure this. The reason is obvious the other bank of river {southern} connects with Afghanistan and Kafiristan and as such it s closed down. In old days the Nagur was one of the key place for crossing the river.

I got down at Mirkhani Fort and introduced myself to the sentry who was courteous enough to offer me a seat in his post. The wing commander was away on a tour to post but was expected to be back before sun down. I sent a chit to the subedar major Akhtar, who after few minutes came out and took me inside. We sat in the lawn and he ordered for food and tea. Food was good, comprising of rice, mutton curry ,

Full Moon at Chitral

salad, rooti and customary fruit. Mean while he arranged for my accommodation.

The fort looks very small after the Drosh Fort stay, a single storied barrack on both ends running all along. The length of fort is not more than 100 yards with a width of another fifty yards. No more wooden barracks or huts, only two exits one at the front and other at rear with another one on eastern wall which looks like make shift. One sentry piquet at the gate and that's all. I was wondering about the officers' accommodation when the sentry took my luggage and i followed him, we exit from the far gate and all of a sudden the full beauty of the fort was revealed. The area between the fort wall and the ridge which originally was meant for stables have now been converted into a beautiful garden having accommodation for troops and in 2009 a beautiful three room hut was constructed; i had one room there.

The mountain battery which came here in the aftermath of 2011 attack is now being relieved with another battery from another regiment , they are arriving today and a tea break was being arranged in their honour. I just kept sitting in the lawn of the hut enjoying the beauty of the area. Being on higher ground the view is extended , with river almost 500 feet down below making its two turns, across the bank of the river the green fields of the Nagur with few house, the fort is not visible from here{Nagur fort}. However a look down reveals the sandy beach of the river which is presently used for playing cricket. It is only now that water has receded otherwise in peak summer it covers everything down below. One thing which i have learnt here is that all old villages are

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on relative higher ground , much higher than normal and all new comers are the one having their houses built near the bank. Thus one can make out which locality is old and native.

Lieutenant Colonel Tauqeer the wing commander also arrived and we had a cup of tae together, the initial few moments with any commander are very important because the whole show can be made or break in these moments. But so far i have found all the officers very respectful and helpful. The other three officers were Major Ali Ahmed the battery commander of outgoing battery and two captains namely Tjdar and Fayyaz. I was also invited to join in the tae break being arranged. Typical army tea break with cold chicken, rice and salad. There was a dance and music as well.

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Later at night we all four sat around the lawn, wing commander had gone to his residence which is also outside the fort his parents are on a visit these days. Major Ali turned out to be a poet of Urdu, he gave me his copy of poetry generally good. He is romantic, nature loving and like all military Urdu poets he is sensitive. He for hours recited his poetry while other two captains long ago hit the bed. Moon still came out and what a view it gave. At night i went to sleep, kind of youngsters that they gave me an independent room.

The day is routine, everyone getting up late, the sun rays are falling on the western bank of the river and the fort is still shrouded in the dim light. The lone rooster has been calling his shouts on regular basis but with no hen in sight it calms down. I had got my first cup of tea and now waiting for the clothes to come back from dhobi. Another long yell from

rooster. In the morning, i just sat out looking at the river and surroundings. Had a breakfast of paratha and omelette , then met the wing commander at 1030 for group photographs which was arranged outside the main gate, elaborate arrangements, traffic was halted for the duration. My other inquisitiveness was to meet Naik Nasir who was the lone survivor of Darashot post attack of August 2011 in which 22 scouts were killed. He was currently posted at a post but wing commander called him down for the interview.

I later roamed around with a scout as guide. There are few shops as well on the outer periphery of the fort, a custom check post and meteorological station is also located. A new mosque is being constructed by the wing also.

We all less wing commander departed for the half an hour drive to Dommel Nissar, the battery commander had to show the new officers the area thus i was lucky to have a lift in the army vehicle.

The journey from Mirkani takes almost 45 minutes of drive, the track is not that bad rather it is grand when compared to the other parts of Chitral, no dangerous curves still any novice can end up at river bed and that was one reason i sat in the rear seat amidst two captains they insisted on mine sitting in front but i regretted, and rather sat with them in the rear between two captains giving all the pleasure of window seats. The scenery is similar to any other part of northern areas, a river running along, track winding through the mountains occasional vehicles carrying wood coming from Arandu direction , i just noted only four vehicles enroute one reason is the road ahead of Dommel Nisar is closed due to mud slides. I

saw the Katusi post enroute and the bridge over it which has been rebuilt by army engineers, the FWO camp and then few more turn and the fort was in sight. The rocks lying on the side of road are iron ore which is precious commodity. No shop, no village on the road; we entered the Dommel Fort. The track goes upward and then stops at a parking bay with few trucks standing, the fort gate and the silhouette of its wall, the wing commander's office which was constructed only recently by Lieutenant colonel Tauqeer stands out as a piece of architect. The maple tree has been preserved and it goes through the veranda of the office, beautiful design. The aroma of fresh pure natural wood fills the air when i entered it. Lieutenant Colonel Naveed is the wing commander, he is from artillery , slim but very cordial, jovial, humble and courteous. I glanced at the wing commanders board and saw Major Ali Imran's name over there.

Naveed is a good company and its after along that i have enjoyed conversation nothing intellectual just pure military fun, he was DQ in Lahore brigade{ 114} and how the things work thee , one really feels pity with the staff officers but now he is enjoying it. Another retired officer came he is working with FWO had been working in the Chitral Scouts in the past, from OTS and from COAS regiment but nothing extraordinary about him same talk about plots and other. He was narrating how he was swindle by his own course mate with his commutation . He left and then after some time we had the lunch in SM's office which is adjacent to wing commander's. Lunch was god, rice, chicken fried but good one and the standard Mountain Dew cold drink followed by the fruit of pears, apples and grapes. It was evening time the

artillery offices left for Mirkani. The Dommel Nisar life is slow rather boorish and lonely and evening games seems to be the right recipe for it; they play volleyball the king of troops games

ⁱ Dr Azmat Hayat Khan The Durand Line its Geo-Strategic Importance, {area Study Centre, University of Peshawar & Hanns Seidal Foundation, Third edition 2005 }p-1.

ⁱⁱ *Imperial Gazetteer Provincial Series North West Frontier Province, 1910*, reprinted by Sang Meel Lahore, 2002, pp-210-215.also see *Proceedings of Third International Hindu Kush Cuturel Conference*, edited by Israr-ud-Din{ Oxford, Karachi, 2008 },pp-305-385.

ⁱⁱⁱ Metropolitan Museum of Art New York City; plaque placed in hall No.1. October 2011.

^{iv} *A Buddhist Reading* , Dough Vincent, approved but unpublished Thesis, University of Western Ontario,2007 also see Buddha &His Doctrines, a bibliographical essay, Otto Kistner,{ London,Trubnar & Company,1869 }

^v *Researches into the Physical History of Mankind*, James Cowles Prichard, Third Edition, Volume IV, [London 1844] p 113.

^{vi} *History of Asia*,Volume I ,Pp-143-145

^{vii} Syed Abul Hasim Nadvi, *Tuzk Taimouri, autobiography of Tamerlane, translated from Persian*, reprinted in 2012 by Sang e Meel Lahore,p-28.

^{viii} *Tuzk-i-Taimouri*, Autobiography of Tamerlane translated from Persian by Syed Abu al Hashim Nadvi {Sange Meel publishers, Lahore, 2012} p.21.

^{ix} *Tuzk i Babri*, Autobiography of Emperor Babur, translated from Persian into Urdu & English., p-9.

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^{xi} Ibid, pp, 134-144. Also see, Muhammad Qaiser Janjua. "[In the Shadow of the Durand Line; Security, Stability, and the Future of Pakistan and Afghanistan](#)". Naval Postgraduate School, Monterrey, California, pp 79-82.

^{xii} Azmat Hayat , *Durand Line*, p-158.

^{xiii} Lieutenant Colonel Afzal Khan , Commandant Chitral Scouts 1971-1973. *Chitral & Kafiristan a Personal study*{ Ferozsons, Lahore, 1975}, pp, 12-17.

^{xiv} Captain H.L.Nevill *Campaigns on The North West Frontier, 1910* .republished by Sang Meel Lahore, 2003. Pages 164-209.

^{xv} Major Muhammad Nawaz {retired} *The Guardians of The Frontier , The Frontier Corps NWFP*, { Headquarters Frontier Corps, Peshawar, 1994}, pp 227-267. Also see *Chitral Story of a Minor Siege* by Major George Robertson., *International Conference on Hindukush*, p-333

^{xvi} *Chitral & Kafiristan, a Personal Study*, p-42.

^{xvii} *Art of War*, Nicollai Machiavelli , translated from Latin.

^{xviii} Provincial Archives, Peshawar, Box No.21 File No. 33A.

^{xix} Report of Captain McCurdy 1930, Chitral Scouts Archive

^{xx} Provincial Archives, Peshawar. File No.29-A.

^{xxi} Anila, Bali .*The Russo-Afghan Boundary Demarcation 1884-95: Britain and the Russian Threat to the Security of India*, (School of Humanities, University of Ulster. Thesis submitted for the degree of D.Phil.1985). pp. 25-27. Also see J.A. MacGahan

Campaigning on The Oxus and the Fall of Khiva (Simpson, London, 1874)pp 163 – 193.

^{xxii} *Partition Of Punjab Official Papers* ,pp 45-65.

^{xxiii} Alastair,Lamb, *Kashmir Disputed Legacy* ,p,161

^{xxiv} Major William Brown, *The Gilgit Rebellion*, {Ibex, Rawalpindi, 1998} p- 117. Victoria Schofield *Kashmir in Conflict; India, Pakistan & the unending War* {London, Taurus, 2010} p-63.

^{xxv} Historical Section, General Staff Branch General Headquarters Rawalpindi, *The Kashmir Campaign 1947-48*,pp10-38.

^{xxvi} Muhammad Yousaf , *Tareeq Baltisatn*, p- 268

^{xxvii} Lieutenant Colonel Mirza Hasasn, *Shamsher say Zanjeer Tak*, urdu, autobiography, 1979, pp, 250-279.

^{xxviii} Naik Iqrara Ud din Khuro, *Chitral aur Chitral Scouts Tareekh kaay ainey mein*, {urdu} unpublished, the writer is a naik in Chitral Scouts,

^{xxix} *Shamsher say zanjeer*, p-271.

^{xxx} Muhammad rahim, tareekh Injigan, hafiz , chitral, 2006, pp, 16-58.

^{xxxi} Lieutenant Colonel Afzal Commandant Chitral Scouts 1971-1973, *Chitral & Kafiristan, a personal reflection* { Ferozsos, Rawalpindi, 1973} p-78

^{xxxii} Ibid.

^{xxxiii} *Chitral & Kafiristan*, Lieutenant Colonel Afzal, 1972, p- 82.

^{xxxiv} Ibid. p-76

^{xxxv} Frontier Corps Newsletter 1966, Chitral Scouts, page 31.

^{xxxvi} Ibid.

^{xxxvii} District Coordinating Officer Chitral, Letter No.4225 dated 1st October 2010.

^{xxxviii} DCO Chitral, Letter No.2818/DCO/dated 6th September 2011.

^{xxxix} Interview with Naik Nasr in September 2013 at Mirkani.